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THE

WORKS

OF

SYMON PATRICK, D.D.

SOMETIME BISHOP OF ELY.

INCLUDING HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

EDITED BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER TAYLOR, M.A.

MICHEL FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

OXFORD,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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A TREATISE

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A

TREATISE

OF

THE NECESSITY AND FREQUENCY OF RECEIVING

THE HOLY COMMUNION,

WITH

A RESOLUTION OF DOUBTS ABOUT IT,

IN THREE DISCOURSES,

BEGUN UPON WHITSUNDAY IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF PETERBURGH,

TO PRESS THE OBSERVATION OF

THE FOURTH RUBRICK AFTER THE COMMUNION OFFICE.

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FOURTH RUBRICK AFTER THE COMMUNION.

And in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the Communion with the priest every Sunday at the least, except they have a reasonable cause to the contrary.

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TO

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM

[SANCROFT]

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

HIS GRACE,

Primate of all ENGLAND, and Metropolitan, one of his Majesty's most honourable Privy-Council, &c.

May it please your Grace,

HAVING endeavoured, with some success, to restore the weekly communions in that church to which I relate, and hoping for greater by publishing these discourses, which I made there upon that occasion; I take the boldness to send them abroad, under your Grace's protection: that if they can do any good, all that shall receive it may understand unto whom, under God, they principally owe it, and stand obliged to acknowledge it.

For it was by your Grace's fatherly care that I was put in mind of this great duty, and exhorted to put it in practice; which produced these meditations, wherein I have pressed it upon others: who will be stirred up, I trust, by this means, to bless God for setting over them such a faithful pastor, as, by taking care to have this sacred food provided continually for them, seeks their "increase in true religion, and their nourishment with all goodness[a]."

They are very blind who do not see this to be a singular blessing; and very hard whose hearts are not affected therewith: especially at such a time as this, when religion calls for all the supports we are able to lend it; and teaches us, it desires no better, no other than itself, if we will but uphold it in our hearts.

[a] [Collect for the seventh Sunday after Trinity.]

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Of which I beseech "the Lord of all power and might, the giver of all good things[b]," to make every one of us so deeply sensible, that we may be no longer negligent in the principal office of it; but in some measure return unto that *first love* towards our blessed Lord and Saviour, from which we, as well as other Christian people, have long since shamefully fallen.

And may the same good God, who put this thing into your Grace's heart, be pleased to bless and prosper all your pious designments; and prolong your days, which are spent in the study of the public good, to see the ancient devotion, and virtue too, not only bud again in this church, but flourish also; and bring forth fruit in such abundance, that it may be the joy of all its friends, the terror of all its enemies, and, as the prophet speaks of Jerusalem, *a praise in the earth*[c].

Then will this that your Grace hath done be spoken of with praise, and posterity will *call you blessed*. Nay, to have but designed and attempted this, whatsoever the issue be, is so praiseworthy, that it will make your name no less honoured in future generations, than that great devotion, which we see combines in you with eminent learning that deep humility which cohabits with the highest dignity, makes yourself to be reverenced in this.

With which reverence if the confidence I take in making this small present to your Grace, seem inconsistent; I comfort myself with the long experience I have had, that the best men are not always the hardest to please, but ever the easiest to forgive: as I doubt not your Grace will the presumption of this address, from,

May it please your Grace,

Your Grace's

Most humble and

Most obedient servant,

SYMON PATRICK.

7th Sunday after Trinity, 1684.

[b] [Collect for the seventh Sunday after Trinity.]

[c] [Is. lxii. 7.]

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TO MY BELOVED FRIENDS

THE

INHABITANTS OF THE CITY OF PETERBURGH.

The reason of printing these Discourses is nothing else but the hope I have, that by presenting to your eyes what you heard lately with your ears, it may make not only a new but a more lasting impression upon your hearts; because you may have recourse to it when you please, and thereby not only refresh your memories, but settle in your minds the remembrance of those things which you perceive have a power in them to persuade you to the constant performance of that duty which is the subject of this book.

A weighty duty it is whose practice I here most earnestly press; and thereby invite you also to the enjoyment of a very high privilege, the highest we are capable of in this present state.

So it was accounted in ancient times, when to be detained from it by sickness or such like hindrance was looked upon as a very sore affliction; under which they groaned so heavily, that they were wont to be comforted by having the holy sacrament sent home to them from the church, in token of peace and communion. But when any one was denied the communion, being thought unworthy to receive it, they looked upon it as the greatest punishment in the world: such a punishment that they could not rest quietly under it; but, being full of grief and sorrow for those sins which kept them from such a blessing, they made most humble supplications, with many tears and most lamentable cries, to be restored to the peace of the church, and communion with Christ in his benefits. They fell upon their knees, and beseeched the forgiveness, and the prayers, and intercessions of their Christian brethren; whom they intreated, after a most lowly manner, to solicit for them, that they might no longer remain in that forlorn condition, banished from the presence of God and from the society of his people.

And till this was effected, they were in anguish of mind and bitterness of spirit; looking upon themselves as lost men, who had the

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sentence of death passed upon them; from which they begged, in sackcloth and ashes, that they might be delivered.

Upon which things when I reflect, I am amazed, and cannot but cry out, saying, Good God! how are we fallen! What a dismal decay is there of Christian piety among us! What an universal lethargy hath seized us in these ages! wherein we see men lying very contentedly under that which the first Christians thought the heaviest calamity: nay, willingly refraining the holy communion, and keeping themselves from it, as unworthy of the benefit, and yet are not at all troubled at it.

What an alteration is this! What new, or rather no Christianity is it, which teaches men now to lie quietly in such a condition as they themselves confess makes them unfit for communion with God, and never to think of bewailing it, and being reconciled to him whom they have thus heinously offended!

This is so sad a consideration, that it ought to awaken all good men to call upon their people, and earnestly beseech them to *remember from whence they are fallen, and repent, and do the first works*[a]. When there was no need to use so many arguments as I have represented to prove this to be a Christian duty, nor so many motives to persuade men to the frequent practice of it, but they ran forwardly to the holy communion, and were troubled above measure if they might not have the privilege to receive it.

There were no quarrels then raised in those days against the manner of its administration; no disputes against the posture wherein it was received. The ministers of Christ had not their precious time taken up in answering objections and satisfying doubts and scruples; much less did they stand in need of the assistance of the civil power to enforce the practice of this duty: which all took to be a commandment of our Lord and Master, to commemorate his wonderful love, and shew forth his death and passion for our sakes; and therefore was no less cheerfully and readily obeyed, than if they had been invited to the most delicious feast, and promised to receive the greatest largesses in the world.

That it may be so again, is the design of publishing these papers; in which I have represented those truths which, if they be weighed and laid to heart, will save us this labour for the future. For I have shown you a short way to be free from all fears and doubts about this matter; which is, not to leave yourselves in uncertainty whether you shall go to heaven or no; but by making that sure, to make

[a] Rev. ii. 5.

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yourselves fit for the holy communion: unto which you may go with an assured confidence, if you have any good hope to be admitted into the society of the blessed in heaven.

If that be out of doubt, you need not doubt of acceptance with Christ at his holy table. For which the best preparation is an holy life, or a serious resolution of it for the future, if hitherto we have lived otherwise. What other preparation had the apostles for the partaking of the first Eucharist with our blessed Lord and Saviour? What other could they have, when Christians received it every day? If we have this therefore which is the main thing, let us not stand upon little niceties, nor waste that time in questioning and debating whether we be fit or no, which ought to be spent in doing this and other Christian duties, whereby we shall be every day fitter to have communion with our Saviour.

Remember, that it is in actions of piety as it is in those of policy. A wisdom that is too scrupulous commonly doth nothing for fear of doing ill. We read of cities that have been taken while the senators were gravely deliberating how to preserve them. Even so is it here too; overmuch niceness about preparation makes men never to be prepared. Therefore it is a fault, when it hinders that duty which it keeps us still thinking how to perform.

Let us not confound ourselves with words, but understand the sense of things; and then we shall not be perplexed, as many have been, in this business of preparation.

Much less will any be affrighted from the holy communion by being commanded to kneel when they receive it: which is no more than they do at their daily prayers; and therefore should the rather be inclined to do here, when we pray and give thanks for the greatest blessings; which we cannot do in too humble a manner. We worship also and adore our blessed Lord in this holy action; and therefore, one would think, should be disposed of ourselves, without any injunction, to fall down upon our knees, in token of the worship which we give him. Which is no popish ceremony; being not so much as enjoined by that church in the act of receiving, nor observed by the pope himself, (who when he receives rather sits, or leans a little forward, upon his throne,) but an ancient devout posture of the best Christians, which the people of the Roman communion observe, by long custom, without bidding; and therefore should much more be cheerfully observed by us, when we are enjoined to keep to the ancient reverence wherewith the saints of God received the pledges of our Saviour's love.

Vouchsafe, I beseech you, to give this small book, wherewith I

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present you, a careful reading, and I doubt not it will free you, not only from these, but from all sorts of scruples, if any of you be troubled with them; which now hinder many people from the greatest duty, and comfort too, of our holy religion.

Which if you would be persuaded to perform often, the profit which would redound to you thereby would be as great as the credit which it would do to our church and religion. For no man can come seriously to the holy communion, but with some resolutions of being better than he hath been; which resolutions are not presently broken, but last for some time. And therefore if there were not too long a distance between one communion and another, it is likely they might last for ever. For before the force of the first resolution were quite lost, it would be backed and strengthened with a second; and so being reinforced from time to time, while it remained in some power, would become so firm that it would never be broken.

Make a trial, I earnestly entreat you; and suffer not this pains which I have taken to serve you, to be thrown away, without that good effect: which it will not be, if you make the trial with the same seriousness wherewith I have written this treatise. In which you will meet with nothing to entertain the fancy, not so much as with fine words and elegant composure; but with good store, I think, of solid sense, to enlighten the mind, to inform the judgment, to pierce the heart, to stir up holy devotion; nay, to turn the will, and produce godly resolutions: which if they be pursued, and have their fruit unto holiness, will in the end bring you to eternal life.

And that such resolutions may be both produced and pursued, I will here add one observation more, for the removing the greatest of those hindrances to holy communion which lie in the way of those who pretend to religion. It is this:

That doubts and scruples being the weakness and sickness of the soul, they that readily entertain them, and then suffer them to remain there quietly and peaceably, are in a very ill case; nay, ought to look upon themselves as in a very dangerous condition. For it is a sign all is naught within; and that they deceive themselves with a vain opinion of their being religious. For they who are truly so groan under their doubts and scruples, as under a sore disease; and therefore will not let them long dwell with them, but seek with all speed to have satisfaction; which when it is offered, they receive with all readiness of mind, and are not loath to be cured; but rejoice that they are set at liberty to serve God without impediment, and that there is nothing left in their souls to oppose their duty.

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Whereas bad people, in a quite contrary way, give admission to those scruples and doubts into their minds with a secret pleasure; and having entertained them, let them rest, and take up their lodging there very willingly; because they will plead their excuse, they fancy, for not doing their duty, and be a defence to their laziness, worldly-mindedness, and other naughty affections.

In short, doubts and scruples never arise in good men's minds without grief, nor stay there without much trouble; and therefore they long to be rid of them; and are glad when they are discharged, because they hinder the performance of their Christian duty: but bad men not only listen to them willingly, but embrace them as welcome guests, which they cherish, and never part withal without difficulty, and some sort of inward displeasure; because they desire the worldly spirit that is in them should not be left without all excuse, but have something to say for itself, when it is pressed by the force of religion against its inclinations.

Search and try yourselves by this mark, and the Lord give you a right judgment in all things, for Jesus Christ his sake. In whom I remain,

Your faithful servant,

S. PATRICK.

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DISCOURSE I.

THE NECESSITY OF RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION.

THE neglect of the holy communion of Christ's body and blood was so general and so long continued in the late distracted times, being laid aside in many whole parishes of this kingdom for near twenty years together, that in some ages of the church it would have been interpreted a downright apostasy from Christ, and a renunciation of the Christian faith.

And though, blessed be God, since the happy restoration of his majesty to his throne, and the settlement of the church upon its ancient foundations, it hath not been so generally neglected, yet it is not so much frequented as it ought to be.

No, not upon such great and solemn days as this; when we are assembled to commemorate that stupendous grace, which our Lord purchased for us by his precious blood, and bestowed upon his church, in sending the Holy Ghost the Comforter, to be a witness of his resurrection and exaltation at God's right hand, and to confirm us in the belief of all that he hath taught and appointed in his church.

For we content ourselves only with the common prayers (and I wish I could say that they are duly attended) and with the sermon; and then turn our backs on that part of the divine service which is properly Christian, and consequently is above all other most acceptable unto Christ, and unto his Holy Spirit.

Which I shall therefore at this time press upon your consciences, as a means to revive that ancient devotion wherewith such festivals as this was kept; which now, alas! is wanting

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among us. And I shall do it from those words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26, wherein he recommends this duty unto us upon this particular account, that *as oft as we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

In which words it is easy to observe these three practical truths. The two first whereof are plainly supposed; and the other is affirmed and enjoined.

DISCOURSE I.

The first thing here supposed is, that IT IS A CHRISTIAN DUTY *TO EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP*, HERE SPOKEN OF; THAT IS, TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD.

DISCOURSE II.

The second is, that IT IS A CHRISTIAN DUTY, WHICH OUGHT TO BE OFTEN PERFORMED. And then,

DISCOURSE III.

It is here plainly asserted, that WHEN IT IS PERFORMED, THE THING DESIGNED IN IT, AND WHICH WE OUGHT TO AIM AT, IS *TO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME.*

The last of these will be sufficiently explained in the handling of the other two; viz. the duty, and the frequent repetition of it: unto which I shall confine my discourse. And of the first at this time.

DISCOURSE I.

THAT it is a Christian duty, incumbent upon every one of us, *to eat this bread, and drink this cup;* that is, to receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood.

This is supposed in the words; which are not to be understood as a mere permission, that we may do this if we think good, and when we think good, but as a command of something we ought to do.

For when he tells us what it is we do when we eat this bread and drink this cup (in which we shew forth Christ's death), it plainly implies that it must be done, and is not left to our choice whether we will shew forth the death of our Lord or no.

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Of which more anon, when I have laid some other things before you, which will convince you, if they be considered, of the obligation that lies upon you to the serious performance of this duty.

And, for our clear and orderly proceeding, I shall cast my discourse into this method.

I. First, I shall shew you that there is a plain institution of this sacrament, and a command that it should be received; and then,

II. Secondly, I shall shew from the practice of the apostles (after that time when they first received it with our Saviour), that it was no temporary command, but of everlasting obligation.

III. Thirdly, that there is more than their practice to interpret the meaning and obligation of this command.

IV. Fourthly, that in this discourse of St. Paul to the Corinthians there are evident proofs of the necessity of its performance.

V. Fifthly, that the very text shews the same, by the end for which it was instituted.

VI. Lastly, that all these reasons are exemplified by the practice of the universal church of Christ.

I.

And first, let it be considered that this holy sacrament is a divine institution, ordained, commanded, and required by Christ himself; who, the same night that he was betrayed, *took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*[a].

Here is as manifest an institution of this sacrament, and as formal a command to *take* and *eat* and *drink* what Christ then gave, as can be contrived in words. Unless they be plainer

[a] Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.

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which we read in other places: for the institution is recorded by the two next evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke; and here again in this chapter by St. Paul. Which two last named say that our Saviour added these words in the institution of this sacrament, *This do in remembrance of me*[b]; which enjoin this duty by as express a command as those of old, *Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy*; and, *Honour thy father and thy mother*: which may henceforth be blotted out of the number of the commandments, if we take this to be none, *This do in remembrance of me*. For we can see no difference at all in the way and manner of the expressions wherein these things are delivered; much less any such difference as makes the former to be enacting words (as lawyers speak), and the latter to enact nothing.

Now, if there were nothing but this express command alone to be urged for this duty, one would expect it should be sufficient to awaken every man to the performance who hopes to find mercy with God, and to be saved by Christ Jesus. For *ye are my friends* (saith he himself, who knew no other terms of it[c]) *if ye do whatsoever I command you*. Which he had said before, in the very first words of the gospel for this day[d], *If you love me, keep my commandments*[e].

How are we then the friends of Christ? Where is our love to him, if we do not this, which is one of the things that he hath commanded in as downright and solemn terms as any other thing whatsoever? His friends! no: *He that shall break one of the least of my commandments*, saith he again, *and teach men so, he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven*[f]: that is, he shall not have any share therein, but be slighted and rejected as he slighted that commandment.

And therefore what will become of those (I beseech you consider it) who break not *one of the least*, but *one of the greatest* of his commandments, as this certainly is? For it is his *last* and dying commandment, and therefore not the *least*. *The same night that he was betrayed, he took bread*, &c. (saith St. Paul here in this chapter, ver. 23). The very night before he suffered he instituted this sacrament, and enjoined his disciples to *do this in remembrance of him*: as a means,

[b] Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. [c] John xv. 14. [d] [Gospel for Whit-Sunday.] [e] John xiv. 15. [f] Matt. v. 19.

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no doubt, to make all the rest of his commands the better observed, by preserving him and his wondrous love perpetually in their memory. Where will they appear then who refuse or neglect to do this? Or what will they be able to say for themselves who have no regard to such a remarkable commandment?

For suppose it had come only in the form of a request, and not with the authority of a command, could any sensible heart have refused to perform it? What! not yield to the desire of such a Friend as well as such a Master, who hath laid such obligations upon us, as none of mankind ever received, nor can receive, but from him alone? This is strange: this is unaccountable. For all the world looks on him as a man of a barbarous nature, void of all humanity, who denies the last suit of a dying person, though a mere stranger to him; especially when it will put him to little or no trouble, but rather be a pleasure to perform it. What a wretched creature then is he, by what monstrous name shall we call him, who puts away from him the last request of a dying Friend, and of a great Friend; one that hath merited ten thousand times more of him than his request comes to? This adds the most hideous ingratitude to his crime, and is moreover such a shameful violation of the sacred laws of friendship, that it makes him most odious both to God and man for ever.

And yet their guilt is not so small as this, who mind not those last words of our blessed Saviour, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Which are more than a request; nay, more than a command; being his last will and testament, which he was about to seal with his blood: and the last will of him who loved us better than his own life; who died that we might live; who of his own accord laid down his life, which nobody had power to take away. For he had all things, even angels themselves, at his command; and more particularly was our most gracious Lord and Master, and hath the most unquestionable authority over every one of us.

Who cannot therefore neglect this his last will and testament without the most dreadful aggravations of such disobedience, nay, contempt, as will remain without a name, till that terrible day, when he shall come himself to charge men with this guilt of slighting his dying words.

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Think of it, I beseech you, what sort of command this is. And (to use the words of an excellent man) if you have any sense of shame, you cannot; any sense of duty, you dare not; any sense of love, you will not neglect it: but come as oft as you have opportunity, and *do this in remembrance of him.* Whose command ought to overawe you, as he is our Lord, since he might have expected to have prevailed with you by his bare entreaties, as he is our Friend.

For it may be further added unto this consideration, that it is a command of a peculiar nature; having no reason for its performance but purely our regard to his will and pleasure, and our true love and affection to him; which is hereby tried, more than by other duties of religion. Unto which there is something in nature to incline us; and it is made our manifest interest by the frame of our souls and bodies, and by the constitution of that society one man hath with another, to be just (for instance) and merciful; to be sober, faithful, and grateful; to live peaceably with our neighbours, and obediently to our governors; and to commend ourselves also to God by prayer, and to give him thanks, &c. But of *doing this,* we should never have thought, had not our Lord required it. And therefore the performance of it is a pure respect to him; the mere effect of our faith in him; and a singular proof of the love and the reverence which we bear towards him: as the neglect of it is an evident demonstration that whatsoever natural virtue men may have, they have no Christian, and so have no title to go to that blessed place where Christ our Lord and Saviour is.

This is the first: upon which I have stayed the longer, because it lays the foundation of all that follows. For

II.

Secondly, upon this precept of Christ the apostles built their practice after his resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven; from whence he sent the Holy Ghost to confirm that which he had instituted and ordained. For immediately upon this, on the very day that the Holy Ghost came down, the number of Christians being enlarged by the addition of three thousand souls to the church, all those converts *continued*

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steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers[g].

Which shews that they did not understand the command of our Saviour about this matter to be one of those which the Hebrews call the "precept of an hour," (that is, to be observed only at that present time when it was commanded,) but to be of perpetual obligation in all future times: for as soon as ever any man became a Christian, he looked upon this as one part of his Christian duty, as much as hearing the sermons of the apostles, and prayers.

I am loath to spend the time in going about to prove against vain cavillers, that by *breaking of bread* is here meant this holy action of receiving the communion, and not their bare eating together. But to give full satisfaction in that matter, let it be briefly considered, first, that *breaking of bread* is here placed in the midst, between other holy actions, *preaching*, *fellowship* (or communicating to one another's necessities), and *prayers*; and therefore, in all reason, must be concluded to be itself of that nature; not a common, but an holy action.

And besides, secondly, their eating at a common table, if it be at all mentioned in this chapter (Acts ii.) under the phrase of *breaking bread*, is spoken of ver. 46, and therefore not intended here. No, nor there neither, I shall show hereafter, for even in those words also, *They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, or at home*, &c., the *breaking of bread* belongs to the holy communion. And to put all out of doubt, thus the Syriac (an ancient translation) understands it[h], expressly turning it thus, "in the Eucharist:" as it doth also Acts xx. 7, *Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them*, &c., that is, "when they came to receive the Eucharist," (saith that translation[i],) which was a part of their Lord's day's work, nay, the principal part; for this was the thing for which the disciples came together, and not merely to hear the apostle preach. And who can give any reason why it should not be so now as it was

[g] Acts ii. 42.

[h] ["Communicabant in oratione et in fractione Eucharistiæ,"—Vers. Syr. interpr. Lat. apud Walton. Bibl. Polyglott. tom. v. p. 524.]

[i] ["Dum congregati essemus ad frangendam Eucharistiam,"—Ibid. p. 598.]

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then? when in familiar speech it was as usual with them to say, they would go to church to receive the holy communion, as it is with us to say in these days, we will go to church to prayers, or to hear a sermon.

III.

But more than this, not only the practice of the apostles and first believers, after they were divinely enlightened by the Holy Ghost, expounds the meaning and the obligation of this precept to be perpetual; but Christ himself showed it so to be after he went to heaven, and was exalted at God's right hand. For appearing to St. Paul to make him one of his apostles, and, in order to it, revealing himself and the whole Christian religion to him, which he gave him commission and authority to preach; he declared this to be a part of his will, and a piece of his holy religion. *For I have received of the Lord* (saith he in this chapter, ver. 23, 24, &c.) *that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, saying, This is the new testament,* &c.

Observe here an evident proof that what our Lord did with his apostles at his last supper, he intended should be done by them and by others when he was gone. For sending one, who was not then with him, nor had any knowledge of him while he was on earth, to preach his gospel, he gives him particular instructions about this matter; to take care to see this done in remembrance of him. So St. Paul (who was the man to whom he appeared, and gave a special commission after he went to heaven) avows to the Corinthians in this place; telling them that he delivered nothing to them but what he had received of the Lord: and what he delivered to them was this, that they should do what the Lord Jesus had done with his apostles, *in remembrance of him.*

This he *received* from him; that is, it was of the Lord's institution, and to be practised by his order and special command, and therefore called *the Lord's supper*, ver. 20; *When ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.* Where it is called the *Lord's supper*, not because it

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was eaten by the Lord with his apostles, (for at that supper the Corinthians were not present, nor was that now done in this place where they came together,) but because it was instituted by the Lord: both then, when he eat that supper with his apostles, and now again, when he appeared to St. Paul, and required him to see this practised in the churches which he converted: and accordingly was now practised in this church at Corinth; to whom this discourse of St. Paul is directed.

IV.

In which we find many things more to prove this to be a necessary Christian duty, which was the fourth head mentioned in the beginning.

I shall single out two; which will make it evidently appear to all unprejudiced minds.

1. The first is very remarkable, that the apostle takes a great deal of pains, and spends a great deal of time, in showing the manner how the holy communion ought to be celebrated among them. Which he would not have done if this had not been a necessary duty, incumbent on them by virtue of Christ's command, and a divine institution.

Do but consider this, I beseech you, and be at the pains to ponder at your leisure, how serious, earnest, and laborious the apostle is here (in this eleventh chapter of his Epistle) to make the Corinthians sensible, by a long discourse about it, after what manner they ought to approach to the table of the Lord: reproving their scandalous behaviour at the communion, directing them how to reform it, and make a due preparation to receive the benefit thereof. And then tell me, or rather tell yourselves, was there any cause for a reasonable man to write so much to show how, and after what manner the thing should be done, if the very doing of the thing had not been necessary, and under the obligation of a command?

Can the manner and way of doing an action be matter of duty, and yet that action itself be no duty at all? or can a man of common sense be very solicitous in giving directions how men should order themselves in a place, and about a business, into which they may never come, but let it alone?

Can the apostle be supposed to say, So and so you ought to eat this bread and drink this cup; and yet there be

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no command tying them to eat it and drink it all? And so and so you ought to prepare yourselves to partake of Christ's body and blood; and yet after that preparation, they might choose whether they would do the thing for which they were to be prepared?

Surely we cannot imagine the apostle to have had so much idle time to spare, nay, to be so impertinent, as to busy himself in ordering the circumstances of an holy action; if the action itself had not been a necessary, nay, a very weighty duty, and of exceeding great moment: which therefore he was highly concerned, and took due care, should be duly performed.

2. To which add this consideration: that had not this been a divine institution, and the practice according to it a duty incumbent on them; it is not to be conceived that the apostle would have suffered the Corinthians to have run so great a hazard as they did by the rude manner of doing that action, if they might innocently have omitted it; and, without any guilt, not have done it at all. Nor would the Corinthians themselves have been so unreasonably cruel to their own souls, as to have incurred the dreadful danger of damnation and death by an unprepared participation of this Sacrament? if they could have satisfied themselves that it was no duty to participate; or not of such consequence, but that it might with safety be let alone.

He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, saith the apostle, *eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; and for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep:* that is, the divine judgment being passed against you hath seized on you, and struck many of you with sicknesses; others with infirmities, aches and pains, and some with death; for your riotous eating of the Supper of the Lord. Doth it not concern you then, unless you be content to lie still under this scourge of God, till you be all cut off, to be better advised, and not expose yourselves in this manner to the wrath of God; which, it is plain by terrible executions, is more than kindled against you.

Now, unto what course doth he direct them, that they might avoid these judgments? Doth he advise them to abstain from the holy Communion for fear of profaning it? to forbear to

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come to the table of the Lord, lest there he stretched out his hand against them, and gave them their death's wound?

This had been the shortest and the safest way, according to the ignorant resolutions men make in this present age, to prevent the danger of damnation; unto which the apostle no doubt would have charitably directed them, if he had not known that the thing itself was a duty, and such abstinence from it a sin.

He could not otherways have refrained, when he beheld the sword of divine vengeance thus hanging over their heads, and many already lie bleeding under it, being stricken down to the ground by sicknesses, plagues and death; he could not, I say, in this lamentable case have abstained from calling to them with the greatest earnestness and compassion, saying, Why do you thus venture your souls and bodies to destruction? why do you not rather stay away, and wholly forbear to approach to the table of the Lord, where you are in danger to be undone for your unworthy receiving the sacred pledges of God's love?

But we hear no such language; because the apostle had not *thus learnt Christ*, nor thus *received of the Lord:* who commanded and expected that they should not abstain from the Sacrament (as the manner now is) but come to it; not rudely indeed, as they did, but in an holy, decent and prepared manner: which it had been in vain to discourse of, if it would have been as well, or would have sufficed, to abstain from the act of receiving.

This was an invention not thought of in those early days; when they took themselves not to be Christians, if they did not frequent the holy Communion; as St. Paul proves they were not good Christians, if they did not take care to come in an holy manner unto it.

That is the thing to which he presses them; and the only way he knew of to avoid damnation. Abstaining from the communion would not secure them; *but let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup*[k]. Not to eat and drink of that holy food, he could not give them a license. He had no such authority; but lay under an obligation to enjoin the doing of the thing, and to press it

[k] Ver. 28.

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earnestly; as a duty that could neither be safely omitted, nor practised without serious examination of themselves, that they *might not come together to condemnation*[1]. To *come together* for this purpose, to eat and drink that bread and that cup, there was a necessity: their only care was, that it might not be *to condemnation.*

Which things, being well considered, do convincingly demonstrate that this is not only a duty, but a weighty duty, strictly enjoined, and not to be omitted; no, not in that church where the profane doing of it had brought down death and destruction upon them from heaven.

V.

The same is evident from the end for which our Lord instituted this Sacrament, and commanded us to receive it; which is, *the publication of the Lord's death till he come.* That is the meaning of this word καταγγέλλετε, *ye do show;* you do *publish,* the word signifies, and *tell it abroad:* you profess this, and *declare* it to all the world, that Christ died for you, and is Lord over you, having purchased you by his blood; and that you own him so to be, and are the servants and worshippers of that Jesus who gave himself to be crucified and to die for you.

This is the general meaning of this holy action: wherein we publicly own Christ, and profess his religion; and give it out to all the world, who see what we do, that we are his, and that we are sensible of it, nay, glory in it, and intend to continue his for ever.

Now, who can have the confidence to call himself a Christian, and not think he stands bound thus to own Christ crucified? And therefore he is bound to do that whereby he doth own him: which is to receive the holy sacrament. Which as often as we do, we shew forth the Lord's death: and as often as we neglect, we do as good as say we are ashamed of him, and of his cross; or that we repent of our Christian profession.

For, if to do this be to shew forth Christ's death, then not to do it is to stifle and smother it as much as in us lies: so

[1] Ver. 34.

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that no such thing as the death of our Lord should be published or known in the world.

This, I am sure, is a true consequence: and our neglect of this duty will be thus interpreted by our blessed Lord when he shall come to take cognizance of it.

Why, will some say, we testify the contrary every time we say the Creed; when we make an open and solemn confession of our faith in him!

But let such persons observe how they argue in this against themselves. For our Lord, in whom they profess to believe, requires that we should not merely in words, though never so express, but in plain actions also represent his death and passion for our sakes; and thereby our high obligations to him.

That is the doctrine of the apostle in this place. For to what end do you *break* the bread but to shew the *breaking*, i. e. the wounding and crucifixion of the Lord's body? And to what end do you *pour out* the wine, but to represent the *shedding* of the Lord's blood by those wounds he received for our sake? And for what end do you *eat that bread and drink that cup*, but to shew that we are made one with him, and have communion with him in his death and sufferings?

This is the general end of this sacrament, gratefully to commemorate the death of Christ; to show, express, declare, and publish his death for us, and our interest in it, in plain and significant actions. Which not being performed in obedience to his command, the faith which we profess in him doth but condemn us of shameful infidelity to him.

As for the particular ends of it, they are as many as the uses are which we can make of his death and passion. Wherein, whatsoever love God the Father showed unto us in giving his dearly beloved Son to die for us; whatsoever kindness God the Son expressed in offering himself freely unto the death, and making himself a sacrifice for our sins; and whatsoever confirmation God the Holy Ghost hath since given us of this love and this kindness, it is all here commemorated.

Whatsoever worship, honour, and service is due to our ever-blessed Redeemer and most bountiful Benefactor, it is all here acknowledged, and, after a most peculiar manner, and with a special respect to him, performed. Whatsoever strength we

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can derive from our feasting with Christ upon his sacrifice, and from the oblation we make of ourselves, souls, and bodies unto him, with most powerful prayers and thanksgivings; whatsoever comfort we can enjoy in communion with God, and in communion with his church; whatsoever peace we can have in renewing our covenant of friendship with him, in remission of sins, in receiving the power of the Holy Ghost, in the hopes of eternal life, in all holy intercourses between heaven and us: all this is to be expected, and may be obtained in the celebration of this holy sacrament.

And therefore, as this one thing, the annunciation or publishing of Christ's death and our relation to him, is the general end; and these comforts, these establishments in faith, and hope, and love, and obedience are the particular ends of this institution: so all these lay a strong obligation upon us duly to observe it, unless we be content to renounce our interest in Christ, who hath made this the most solemn badge and authentic mark of our Christianity, and the great means of conveying to us the benefits of his death and passion, as well as a pledge to assure us thereof.

And this one argument alone, taken from the end of its institution, is sufficient to convince us that this sacrament was intended by Christ to be continued in his church *till he come* (as my text speaks), that is, till his last coming to judge the world: for till then it will be useful, nay, necessary for all these holy ends which I have briefly named. And whosoever he be that hopes for mercy at that dreadful day without the careful performance of this duty, is a presumptuous person, and vainly expects it; because he lives in the neglect of the very best way of preparing himself for that great account which must then be made of all our actions.

VI.

But now let us suppose that the words of the institution had been so ambiguous, that they might possibly (if we had had no further explication of them) have been thought to be limited to that particular feast which Christ did eat with his disciples, and extended no further; yet the practice of the apostles, and the practice of the church in the apostolical times, and in all succeeding times ever since (which are the best interpreters of

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the Scriptures), do expound the words to be a lasting institution and an institution of such moment that it ought to be most punctually observed.

And did not Christ's own apostles, think you, understand their Master's meaning when he instituted this sacrament? Or if they had not understood him then, would they not afterward have understood him, when the Spirit was so plentifully poured out upon them that they discovered the greatest secrets; even the thoughts and designs of men's hearts?

Hath the universal church in and after those times, and during all ages since, lived in an error, and taken up an unnecessary practice, or made too much stir about it, and been too busy and officious in it? Was there not in this very church of Corinth (as the apostle shows in the next chapter) a miraculous abundance of miraculous gifts? *the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of knowledge, the spirit of faith, the gifts of healing, of working miracles, of prophesying, of discerning spirits, of divers kind of tongues, of interpretation of tongues?* And could not all those gifts, all those spiritual powers and supernatural assistances enable them to understand the words of Christ's institution? Was not that indeed the true *age of the Spirit?* Were they not infinitely more enlightened than any can pretend to be now, or hope to be hereafter? And could they not discover by their illuminations (if it had been true) that which some vain enthusiasts dream of, that where there was such plenty of the Spirit, there was no need of such outward ordinances as the sacrament of the Lord's supper? Could they not see this so clearly, and be so sensible of it as that they should not have been so much concerned as they were about the practice of this duty in that church, if there was no need of it, or our Saviour never intended it should be of much moment? Nay, as that they should not have, with such danger to themselves, (as I noted before) repeated it in their church, if our Saviour never intended any such repetition?

Surely these things carry such evidence in them, that to add more light, in so clear a case, would be (as we say) to hold a candle to the sun. And therefore I shall here make an end of my proofs: supposing I have said rather too much than too little in this argument, and that you stand fully convinced the celebration of this holy communion is not only of divine insti-

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tution, to be used by the church in all ages, but must of necessity be duly practised by us if we hope to be saved.

And if that be true, hearken then, I beseech you, what follows thereupon.

i. What shall we then think of those who live in the constant neglect of it?

Suffer me to propose this single plain question to you: whether the wilful continuance in any known sin be not a damnable state; a state of direct opposition to our Saviour, and consequently a state wherein there is no salvation? Can this be denied? And it is as undeniable, that a constant neglect of a known precept of Christ—a precept so universally owned, so universally practised, as you have heard, in the church of God—is a wilful sin. What is it else? or what can make a sin wilful but acting against a clear knowledge, and conviction, and means and opportunities of doing otherways?

Consider of it, I beseech you, again and again. If wilful sins do not actually damn, being continued in, let us know what sins they are for which men are damned: or do you think there is any such thing as damnation at all? Certainly, if there be damnation, it is for wilful sins; and if there be wilful sins, they are sins deliberately committed against a known law; and if there be any known law among Christians, this is one, that they ought to receive this holy sacrament in remembrance of their Lord and Master's death for them: and therefore the constant, the affected, the upbraided, the reproved and yet not reformed omission of this duty, is most certainly a deliberate, nay, a presumptuous omission of it; or else there is no such thing as presumption in the world.

What will you think then of yourselves, I ask again, if from time to time, from month to month, nay, from year to year, you wilfully neglect a plain, an evident, an undoubted precept of our blessed Lord and Saviour? a precept commanding us to commemorate his death, to represent his passion, to admire his love, to praise his kindness, to partake of his graces, to share with him in his comforts, to knit ourselves faster to him in holy obedience, and to rejoice in hope of feasting with him and all the company of the blessed in his heavenly kingdom?

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If you have not been hitherto convinced of this duty your sin is the less, and may in some measure admit of an excuse; but if, being now convinced, you stand out and still neglect the performance of it, then can you not in anywise have the least excuse for your wilful disobedience. And if you be not now convinced by these things which have been represented to your minds, I must say it is because you wilfully refuse, because you will not receive conviction. And this wilful refusal to be convinced, this shutting your eyes against the clear light wherein this duty is shewn to you, is still another wilful sin, added to the presumptuous neglect of the holy communion.

ii. Satisfy yourselves about what I have now proposed: determine what is like to become of you if you continue in a wilful sin (as the neglect of the holy communion most certainly is, when the will of Christ, in an express law commanding it, is made known to you and pressed upon you), and then I may be the less earnest in beseeching you to remain no longer under this heavy guilt. For how can you, with your eyes open, run yourselves into eternal damnation? what need is there that I should beseech you not to throw yourselves headlong into the fire that never shall be extinguished? It is sufficient to entreat you once more to consider what hath been said, to believe it, and to keep it in mind; and then you will make an amends for former neglects by a more careful and zealous performance of this duty in time to come.

Especially if you consider how by neglecting this duty you neglect all those invaluable blessings which are represented, offered, and communicated to us in the right performance thereof.

This is the only argument whereby I shall further urge you; but I will press it in a few particulars.

1. And first, there is nothing wherein all Christians do more universally agree than this, that God, in giving his Son to die for us, demonstrated the greatest love that was ever shewn to mankind. Which incomparable love, we all agree likewise, is represented, expressed, and recommended to us in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. And can we think fit then to neglect this holy communion? for do we not therein

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neglect and undervalue that wonderful love which in the holy communion is most effectually represented, laid before us, and exhibited unto us?

Is the love of God so inconsiderable a thing as to be slighted and passed by with careless neglect? Is the death of Christ, wherein that love appeared, so small a thing as to be forgotten or seldom thought of; and that although he hath instituted a sacrament on purpose for its commemoration? And do we not forget and slight it, when we regard not that institution, and make no such commemoration?

I know how loath men are to yield to these convictions, and how desirous they are to support themselves in a belief that they neither undervalue that love, nor forget this death, though they do not attend at the table of the Lord: for they remember both, they say, in their own private thoughts, and give God thanks for his inestimable love in giving Christ to die for them.

But suppose they say true, that they have such a sense of God and of our blessed Saviour, as not altogether to let them slip out of their minds, nor wholly forget their benefits; yet let them weigh this seriously, that where a known divine institution, appointed on purpose for the commemoration of Christ's death, and of God's love therein manifested, is neglected, it must be confessed that the same love of God and death of Christ is in a very sinful degree undervalued and forgotten. For no friend will think himself remembered by him, who lays aside that very thing which he left him, and solemnly desired him to wear, in token of his remembrance.

Let such men consider also, that they stand bound not only to remember or call to mind Christ's death privately, but openly to make that solemn and public commemoration of it which is commanded by our blessed Lord. And in like manner, it is not sufficient to have a value of God's love; but we ought to shew our esteem of it in the practice of that institution wherein that love is signally represented to us.

In brief; we deceive ourselves if we imagine we remember God's love in the death of Christ as we ought to do, while we do not express and show our remembrance by that sign and token which he hath appointed as a testimony thereof.

If we do it not in this way, he will look upon us as forgetful of him and of his love.

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2. And by forgetting that, it is not to be conceived how much mischief we do to ourselves and others. For we are all agreed that the consequence which St. John draws from what hath been now said is good and strong; *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*[m]. Which mutual love the apostle presses by such arguments in that epistle as demonstrate a man hath nothing of God in him who wants this grace; which contains at least one half of the duty of a Christian.

Do we not need then to have this love enkindled, or rather inflamed, nourished, and increased in us by all means? and is there any means so effectual as the consideration, the solemn consideration how the great God hath loved us, though utterly unworthy of his love, nay, deserving his heaviest displeasure? And where is this represented so lively to us as in the holy communion? which Christ hath also appointed on purpose to be a sacred bond of love, unity, peace, and concord among Christians, by their all eating of one and the same bread, and drinking of one and the same cup.

Which while they neglect, how can they pretend to the love of God? or how can they hope to have this mutual love one to another rooted in their hearts? when they never or seldom communicate together in the most holy things? never own that they are members one of another; nor link themselves together by that common tie of charity, which their Lord hath instituted, and commanded them to use, for this very end among others; that they may be knit together in one body, be of one mind and heart, and live in peace?

No, they are all broken in pieces, they are torn in sunder, and continue so; and hate and malign, and bite and devour one another: and that with a most implacable rage and malice, to the great scandal of religion; the spoiling of human society; the danger of overturning government, and thereby ruining all our outward comforts.

And shall we heighten this guilt by adding this aggravation to it, *that we love to have it so*[n]*?*

If we have any kindness left one for another, nay, any kindness for ourselves, let us not refuse the means of a cure: this

[m] 1 John iv. 11. [n] [Jer. v. 31.]

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sovereign means, which alone will prove an effectual remedy. Being a remedy of God's own prescription and appointment, for the quenching all our unnatural heats, and the killing all our unchristian hatreds, and the burying of all our animosities and quarrels, so that they shall never rise again: or if they do, be immediately extinguished, and laid again in their graves, by laying a new obligation upon ourselves in this Sacrament, to love one another; *and to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour* [n].

3. In which Sacrament I might represent how many comforts there are contained, besides those of love; comforts infinitely more satisfactory than those vain, those perishing pleasures of which sensual men are so greedy, that they make them neglect this holy communion: and thereby lose those divine, those heavenly joys which Christ, in the serious use of it, imparts unto his members.

But, to shorten this discourse, let it suffice to ask you, what is there in the love of God towards mankind which you can think more valuable than the *covenant of grace*, by which alone you have the promise of remission of sins assured unto you? And consequently, how can you forget that most precious blood, which ratifies, which confirms and seals that gracious covenant? Or how can you neglect that special means, which the love of God our Saviour hath ordained, for the preserving the remembrance of his most precious bloodshedding fresh in your minds?

If you do truly remember that blood which was shed, that body which was broken for you; you must at the same time judge it fit and necessary to demonstrate you remember it, by making that commemoration of it which our Lord requires: and not neglect to see that represented to the eye, and expressed by real actions lively signifying the death of Christ, which you pretend gratefully to commemorate in your hearts.

It is much to be feared, that they do but deceive their own souls, who pretend to the one without the other.

For did not God frame and fashion you in your mother's womb? And doth not he who framed you there know your

[n] Ephes. v. 2.

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frame and your mould better than you can do yourselves? And did he not therefore appoint this outward representation of his love in the holy communion, because he knew otherwise you would not be sufficiently sensible thereof? What other reason can there be assigned for this institution, but the wise goodness of God; who knows that divine things accommodated to sense do, by affecting the eye, better affect the heart, than it would be affected without such sensible applications? This is the reason why he hath made spiritual things to become in great measure sensible, in accommodation to our nature, and compliance with our frame; which he best knows, because it is of his own contrivance: who hath clothed our spirits with flesh; and therefore moves the inward powers by outward signs. Which if we slight, or neglect these means of being affected with spiritual things, which God, who most perfectly understands how our minds may be best moved, hath accommodated and appointed for that end; it is evident we despise the wisdom of God: or are vainly conceited of ourselves; and presume to think that we can be as well affected without these outward means and sensible helps, which he hath instituted for our spiritual improvement.

A strange presumption this! But which every one is guilty of, who contents himself with bare thinking of Christ, and of his love in dying for us; without the use of those sensible signs which he hath appointed to awaken our minds unto a more lively and deep apprehension and sense of his love than any thing else can give us.

4. To all which considerations let this be added; that the great support and comfort, the very life of every Christian soul, is to be in a state of friendship with God; by continuing in the holy covenant we have made with him, and he with us in Christ Jesus. If this be not preserved carefully, all true joy in this world is lost together with it.

Now, do you not find yourselves too prone to break your baptismal vow? and thereby to violate that covenant wherein you stand engaged, and sacredly promised to keep? And shall not that covenant, after you have violated it, be solemnly and speedily renewed; that the breach between God and you may be healed, and you may notwithstanding look upon him as your Father? And is not the Sacrament of Christ's body and

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blood appointed for this renewal? Do you know any other solemn way of being reconciled again?

What account then can be given of it, that so many having broken this covenant are not at all concerned to renew it, but remain separated from God, and from holy communion with him? How come we to be so careless of our souls, so negligent of God, so unconcerned in the covenant of grace, as wilfully, continuedly, from time to time to forbear that holy ordinance; wherein not only this covenant is renewed, but so many mercies of God, as you have heard, commemorated and represented; so many joys, so many comforts and spiritual assistances communicated unto us?

There is no account to be given of this matter, no reason that can be assigned but only this: that men will not seriously consider either their duty or their interest. Or if they do, when they are clearly represented to them, they forget and lay aside all those considerations; and do not immediately pursue them whither they would lead them. And so they turn to something else; which takes up their thoughts and their time, and engages their affections; till they be carried away captive by the lusts of the flesh and of the world; beyond the power of any means, that we know of, to rescue them from destruction.

But I hope better things of those who duly attend to what hath been said; and that all those who have not now prepared themselves for this holy duty, of showing forth the Lord's death, whereby he purchased, among other blessings, the great gift of the Holy Ghost (which it would have been most proper on this day to have most solemnly acknowledged), will speedily set themselves about it: and be ready against the next opportunity; that is, against the next Sunday, or at least the next after that; and so for the time to come be careful to perform this duty, as oft as the Christian religion requires.

Which, I shall demonstrate in the next Discourse, is much oftener than men imagine.

The end of the first Discourse.

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DISCOURSE II.

THE FREQUENCY OF HOLY COMMUNION.

HAVING demonstrated in the foregoing Discourse that it is a duty indispensably lying upon all Christians to receive the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood; a duty of great weight and importance; for the neglect of which I do not see how we can atone by the performance of any other duty whatsoever: I proceed to shew that it is a duty which ought to be frequently repeated; *for as oft as ye eat this bread* (saith the apostle) *and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* Which plainly insinuates that they did this *often.* And that it was their duty so to do, shall be the subject of this present Discourse.

And here now, in the very entrance of it, I must acknowledge that we are not told either in this place of Scripture, or any other, how often we ought to communicate, or how frequently the church ought to make this commemoration of Christ's death and passion for our sake.

Of which observation men now make a very bad and preposterous use. For, finding that our Lord hath only said, *This do in remembrance of me,* but nowhere said when, at what time or times it is to be done, they imagine that they satisfy his will, if they do not wholly withdraw themselves from his table, though they come never so seldom thither.

And truly, by this sort of reasoning, that because we are nowhere told how often we should *do this,* we need only take

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care to do it sometime or other, it may be thought sufficient if we do it but once in our whole life. And so dangerous are such conceits, which men frame to themselves from such observations, that vast numbers (though otherwise not wicked) live in a constant neglect of this duty till they come to die; and then, upon their death-beds, calling for this sacrament and receiving it, they think they have fulfilled the will of our Lord in *doing this* as he hath commanded; because, though he hath commanded it to be done, he hath nowhere commanded when, or how oft it should be done.

From whence we may certainly conclude that this is a false consequence, which men draw from the silence of the holy Scriptures in this matter; because it is so dangerous and pernicious, that, in a manner, it quite destroys our religion, by taking away this part of it, which is the principal, and making it unnecessary as long as a man lives, so he be but sure to receive when he is at the point of death.

Of that indeed no man can be assured; but supposing he doth receive the communion at the very last gasp, he is thus far safe, and not guilty of the breach of this commandment, if this consequence be true; that because our Saviour hath nowhere appointed the time, or said how frequently we should *do this in remembrance of him*, we do comply with his institution, provided we do it some time or other.

Now, to destroy this false notion, from whence such absurdities flow, I shall, in the first place, show you, that the quite contrary naturally and necessarily follows from this observation of our Saviour's appointing no time for the performance of that which he required to be done in remembrance of him.

From whence men's wicked hearts draw this conclusion, as I have said, that it may suffice to do this now and then, though never so seldom.

I.

But the true, the genuine, and honest conclusion which follows from thence is this: that our Lord having named no fixed settled time or times for the performance of this holy action, it is an argument that he designed and appointed it as a constant, common, and ordinary part of the Christian service which he would have performed in his church at all times.

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Let those words of Christ, *this do in remembrance of me*, be well weighed, and there is no man can infer less from thence, than that if he had intended this should be done only at some such great and solemn times as the passover was among the Jews (when he first instituted this feast, and eat it with his disciples), he would not have suffered us to be ignorant of his meaning, but told us in plain terms, that upon some certain days, and at some extraordinary assemblies this should not be forgotten; but that he having named no time whatsoever, we ought to look upon his words as instituting this holy action to be a part of that worship, honour, and service which he expected from his people in all their religious assemblies.

For being ordained *in remembrance of him*, it is most reasonable to think he intended this commemoration should be as constantly made as they met together to acknowledge him for their Lord and Saviour and only Mediator with God the Father.

And being a commemoration ordained instead of all the sacrifices whereby, under the law, they daily implored the mercies of God, or gave thanks for them, it ought, in all conscience, to be as continual a rite of religious worship as those sacrifices were.

And thus, when men had upright hearts and unbiassed affections, they did honestly understand our Saviour's meaning, and accordingly made this a constant part of their divine service: which is the next thing I would desire you to observe. For I would not have you to rely merely on my reasonings and inferences (though I verily think this would appear a true way of arguing, and a right conclusion unto any unprejudiced mind, if we had no more to justify it), but as a further evidence of this, nay, as a full conviction that we ought so to take it, I beseech you seriously to consider, that,

II.

Thus the apostles and the first Christians understood the meaning of our blessed Saviour in this institution. And can we have any better expositors of his words, any surer directors of our practice, than such great servants of his who were filled with the Holy Ghost? who never met together to worship God and our Saviour, but this was a part, and a principal

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part too, of the service they performed in those assemblies. If I can make this good, the other will follow: for there can no other account be given why they did this as constantly as they assembled themselves for divine service, but because they took that to be our Saviour's meaning and intention when he said, *This do in remembrance of me.*

Now there is nothing more apparent in the holy story than this, that the apostles, and those whom they first converted, made this a daily part of the offices of religion. For we read that when three thousand souls joined themselves to the church upon the day of pentecost, *they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers*[a]. Where *breaking of bread*, I proved before, signifies their receiving the eucharist; and now observe, that the words we translate *continued steadfastly* (which in the Greek are ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες) signify, that they were constant and assiduous in this holy action. For the word imports frequency, as appears from other places, particularly from Rom. xii. 12; where there is the same word in the apostle's command for prayer, and we translate it, *continuing instant in prayer.* And Coloss. iv. 2 it is joined with *watching thereunto with thanksgiving.* From which observations we gain this; that as frequent and instant as they were in prayer, so frequent and instant they were in breaking of bread: for they were προσκαρτεροῦντες, constant and unwearied in them both alike.

Now what this constancy or frequency was, is expounded in the 46th verse, where St. Luke saith, *they continued* (the same word again) *daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house*, or *at home*, as the word is better translated in the margin of our Bibles: where we see that *breaking of bread at home*, in their own private houses, was as daily as their going to the temple publicly, and can be meant of nothing but their receiving the holy communion every day. For no man can so much as imagine a reason why breaking of bread should be mentioned as their daily practice at home, together with their resort to the temple service abroad, but to signify that they communicated among themselves in the service of the eucharist or holy communion, proper

[a] Acts ii. 42.

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to the faith of Christians, as they communicated with the Jews in the service of the temple, common to all the disciples of Moses.

You may impute this, it is possible, to the warmth of their zeal: but remember withal, that this zeal was grounded upon knowledge, which they wanted not in those days. And the knowledge they had of Christian religion taught them, that when our blessed Saviour commanded them to do this in remembrance of him, naming no time when it should be done, he meant it should be done always in their Christian assemblies, as the perfection and crown of that service for which they assembled.

III.

And indeed, if we had not had these records of the practice of the apostles and of the first Christians, to explain the meaning of our Saviour's institution, yet we should have had reason to think it was so in the apostles' days, (and therefore the meaning of our Saviour,) because this practice of receiving the holy communion every day continued in the church for some ages. I cannot say in every place, (for we have no records of that, but rather of the contrary,) but in many places, and in the most famous that are come to our notice; and where the vigour of Christian religion remained, and where they were awakened by more than ordinary dangers to consider their obligation.

Thus we find St. Cyprian in his Exposition of the Lord's Prayer[b], takes that petition, *Give us this day our daily bread*, to signify, in the spiritual sense, our desire to be fit "to receive the eucharist every day for the food of salvation." And in his epistle to the church of Thibaris, speaking of a more grievous and fiercer fight of persecution hanging then over their heads, he tells them, Therefore the soldiers of Jesus Christ ought to fortify and arm themselves well against it, with an uncorrupt faith and robust virtue; considering that they did for this end *quotidie calicem sanguinis Christi bibere*[c], &c., 'every day drink the cup of Christ's blood, that they might also be able to shed their own blood for Christ's sake.' In which words he addresses his discourse to the laics, as well as the clergy, ex-

[b] [De Orat. Dom. p. 147.]

[c] [Epist. liii. p. 120.]

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horting all the faithful unto the constancy of martyrdom, which men, women and children endured.

Nay, long after this we learn from St. Hierome, (in his Apology to Pammachius for his books against Jovinian[d], and other places,) that this custom continued at Rome and in Spain, as well as in Afric; where St. Austin tells us, (in his famous Epistle to Januarius[e],) that in his time some did *quotidie communicare*, &c., 'daily communicate of the body and blood of our Lord;' though others, he acknowledges, did it only on certain days. St. Basil also begins his Epistle to Cæsaria Patritia in this manner; 'To communicate every day, and partake of the holy body and blood of our Lord Christ, καλὸν καὶ ἐπωφελὲς, is a commendable and profitable thing[f]:' and then adds, that they did communicate four times a week in his church, on the Lord's day, Wednesday, Friday, and the Sabbath, that is Saturday; 'and on other days if the memory of any martyr fell upon them.'

Nay, three or four ages more after this, such a sense of this devotion remained, that Walafridus Strabo (in his Book of Ecclesiastical Affairs, c. 208.) says, "It seems to be very full of reason, that Christians, especially clergymen, should every day be employed in divine offices; and, when some very grievous spot of mind or body doth not hinder, receive the Lord's bread and blood, without which we cannot live: imitating the wholesome diligence of the primitive church, concerning whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that they *persevered in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers:* and a little after, *they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house*, &c., quoting the words I named before.

All which, and much more that might be said, make it apparent that the church in the best times, and the best men in the church in after-ages, looked upon this as an ordinary part of Christian worship; which Christ intended should be performed in his church as oft as they assembled for divine service. And what other ground could they have for it but

[d] [Epist. l. c. 6. tom. i. p. 227; et Epist. xxviii. t. i. p. 434.]

[e] [Epist. liv. cap. 2. tom. ii. col. 124.]

[f] [Epist. cclxxxix. tom. iii. p. 186.]

[g] [Max. Biblioth. vet. Patr. tom. xv. p. 190 F.]

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this, that Christ having confined it to no time, they thought, in reason, it should be taken for a duty he expected from them at all times when they came to worship him, and make their thankful acknowledgments unto him.

IV.

And truly we can gather no less from the very nature of this holy action; which sufficiently shows it was our Saviour's meaning that it should be a daily part of the church's service. It being, as all know, a solemn thanksgiving unto God, and a form of prayer and petitioning (which every one confesses are acts of worship to be constantly performed), and also a commemoration of that upon which the efficacy of all our prayers and thanksgivings depends, viz. the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross: which is here likewise represented unto God, as that which appearing always before him in the heavens, intercedes for us, and makes all our sacrifices acceptable to his majesty.

And besides all this is the peculiar worship which the church gives unto Christ, as a grateful acknowledgment of his unparalleled love in laying down his life for us, to purchase the most inestimable benefits, which he herein also assures unto us, and bestows upon us. Which is in part declared in these words, upon which I have built my discourse, wherein we are told the end of this holy sacrament is, '*to show* or publish *the Lord's death*;' that is, 'show it with praise;' predicate, extol, and magnify (as the word καταγγέλλειν imports), proclaim with our highest praises, the lovingkindness of the Lord, in the glorious work of our redemption through his most precious blood: but is more fully declared in the very words of the institution, when he said, *Do this in remembrance of me;* which show that our doing this is the peculiar honour we do our blessed Lord, by making a public commemoration that he took our nature upon him; that he died for us; that he obtained thereby a glorious victory over all our enemies; that he purchased for himself and for us immortal glory, and is now at God's right hand, in full power to bestow it upon us. In memory of all these things, saith our Saviour, *Do this*, that when I am dead I may always live in your hearts, and the knowledge of all these things may go down to all posterity, and be commemorated from one generation unto another for ever with thankful praises; but

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especially the memory of my death may be transmitted to them, and be celebrated with continual acknowledgments.

For it was but fit that he should be publicly honoured in that which, when he suffered, exposed him to the greatest contempt. And no doubt it was the design of God, in appointing this rite of holy worship, to have his death commemorated with everlasting praises, which, for the present, had brought him into the utmost disgrace. To which purpose is that passage in an Easter sermon ascribed to Cæsarius bishop of Arles[h]: "Because he intended to remove out of our sight the body which he had taken, and to place it in heaven, it was necessary that in the same day he should consecrate for us the sacrament of his body and blood, to the end that we should honour by the type that which had been once offered for the price of our salvation."

In short, this is the proper worship of God incarnate, and of our crucified Saviour; and therefore cannot be thought by wise considerers to have been intended to be left unto uncertainty whether we would perform it or no, or when we would be pleased to perform it; but to have been ordained as a daily service, which should be continually performed unto Christ.

Which, in truth, the continual necessities of the church require; it being the principal act whereby we have communion with Christ, and partake of the sacrifice he made on the cross. We are united unto him, as members of his body, in the other sacrament of baptism, wherein also his Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us, as a principle of life and motion suitable to our religion; which directs us unto this sacrament as the chief outward visible means of preserving our union with Christ, by having constant communion with him, and with his Holy Spirit: whose influences he here communicates unto us for our growth and increase in spiritual life and holiness; and we therefore in reason should be desirous constantly to receive, because we constantly want them, and are too apt to start aside from him unto whom we ought to keep ourselves steadfastly united by faith, and love, and uniform universal obedience.

Put now all this together, that it is an act of holy worship; a worship altogether as peculiar to the church as the sacrifice

[h] [Serm. vii. Max. Biblioth. vet. Patr. tom. viii. p. 825 C.]

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on the cross is peculiar to Christianity; the only worship wherewith we honour our blessed Lord and Saviour; a commemoration, nay, a representation of that which makes all our services acceptable unto God; and the principal way and means whereby we have communion with Christ, from whom we stand in continual need of the communication of his grace: and we shall soon be satisfied that the plainest and most reasonable answer that can be given to those who ask, How often did Christ intend we should eat of this bread and drink of this cup? is this; As often as we assemble publicly to worship God our Saviour. For there is no worship peculiar to him but this: nor is there any wherein we have such communion with him as in this; by which we do truly and indeed participate of the sacrifice offered unto God upon the cross, as the Jews and the Gentiles did of their sacrifices offered up on their altars.

Thus the apostle discourses at large in the chapter before my text, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, &c.; where he takes it for an undeniable truth that Christians do communicate with God their Saviour, in the merits of his death, by receiving the holy eucharist: and thence proves it to be unlawful for them to partake of the Gentile sacrifices, by proving that to eat of their sacrifices was to be accessory to their idolatries; as the Jews, by eating of such sacrifices as were offered among them, did *partake of the altar* (or did communicate with the altar), that is, communicate with God, whose altar that was upon which the sacrifices were consumed. Which evidently supposes that Christians also did in the eucharist partake of a sacrifice, and were thereby joined to Christ, who was that Sacrifice; which though carried by him into the most holy place of the heavens, there to be presented unto God, is no less participated by Christians in this holy feast of the eucharist, than the Jews did participate of their offerings of thanksgiving on the altar.

I know very well it will be objected, that by understanding our Saviour's meaning in this institution after this manner, we prove a great deal too much, and argue our public service to be defective, when it wants this peculiar worship of Christ which he ordained.

To which I shall only say this, that if by discoursing thus we prove no more than is true, our worship must be confessed to be but imperfect when the holy communion is wanting; not

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so perfect, at least, as that of the ancient Christians was. Which we had much better honestly acknowledge, and beseech God to accept for Christ's sake of such services as we do perform, though in some regard, and in comparison, imperfect ones, than, by going about to defend untruths, and establish false notions in religion, to make ourselves more guilty before God.

I know also it will be urged against what I have said, that surely it is sufficient if we every day pray to God in Christ's name, and for his sake desire our prayers may find a gracious audience; praising him also as our Saviour and Redeemer and Intercessor at God's right hand; though we do not use these visible signs which he hath appointed.

But if this be entirely sufficient, so that our Christian worship may be justly thought entire, complete, and perfect, without *doing this in remembrance of Christ;* then for what end was it instituted by him? Why did he appoint it, if our worship be complete without it? then it is as needless and superfluous an addition to the Christian service as we seem now, by our entire neglect of it or seldom performance, to imagine it to be.

Which since no Christian dare say, because it disparages the wisdom of our Saviour in appointing it, if all be perfect without it; we must therefore, to our shame, take the other course, and say, that we are fallen into a state of imperfection, but hope our less perfect services will be accepted by virtue of that most perfect sacrifice of Christ which we commemorate publicly as oft as we are able.

V.

And that might very well be oftener than we do commemorate it: for I shall now proceed to tell you (as an introduction to the account I am about to give how the service of the church came to be so defective), that when Christian people grew less devout, yet still they did not fail to perform this peculiar service to Christ every Lord's day and holy-day at the least; that is, on those days of the week, as you heard out of St. Basil, when the memory of any martyr was celebrated. Which in time becoming the practice of many churches, made an ancient writer about divine offices (mentioned by Cassander in his book of Liturgies[1]) affirm, that men employed in secular businesses

[1] [Cap. 33. p. 81.]

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received the communion, even in the primitive times, only on the Lord's days and other festivals; interpreting, as many think, the practice of the most ancient times by the customs of his own.

It is possible indeed that he had a better reason for what he affirmed; because we find something in Scripture to countenance this opinion, that very early some Christians did content themselves with so doing. For in Acts xx. 7, we read, that at *Troas upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread* (i. e. to receive the Eucharist) *Paul preached unto them*, &c. From whence it should seem (saith our learned Mr. Thorndike[k]) that in this church at Troas the Eucharist was celebrated, even in the times of the apostles, not every day as it was at Jerusalem, but only on the Lord's day.

For the first day of the week being mentioned as the time when they came together to break bread, it seems, saith he, to stand against the rest in terms of difference; as if upon other days they did it not.

And thus much I believe is certain, that when the church was multiplied, all Christians could not meet together every day; but some one day, some another; and all on the Lord's day. Which being the principal day, it came to pass in process of time, that it was the only day of the week when they celebrated the eucharist; but on that day none omitted it, no more than they did the rest of the Christian service. And thus, it seems to me most reasonable to understand the matter here at Troas: where they did not omit the communion on other days, (for I cannot persuade myself but that they were conformable to the mother church of Jerusalem,) but such as could assemble themselves, and attend upon divine service daily, did receive it; and on the Lord's day all the Christians in the city came together for that purpose; and whatsoever business they had, which hindered them on other days, it did not hinder them on this; but they all came to do their duty to their Saviour, and make a public commemoration of his love.

And in this they were so strict for a long time, and it was accounted so great a fault to be absent, that if any persons

[k] [Of the service of God at religious assemblies, chap. 8. § 40. Works, vol. i. p. 295.]

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were found not to have communicated for three Sundays together, they were to be excommunicated, and separated from the society of the church, by the canons of three several synods mentioned by Zonaras upon the eleventh canon of the apostles [l]: which orders them to be cast out, 'as an offence to the church,' who entered into the church and heard the holy scriptures, but did not stay for the prayers, nor receive the holy communion. Which was thought so necessary, that the deacon who before the communion (as you shall hear anon out of St. Chrysostom) cried, "All you who are under penance, you who cannot pray (i. e. with the faithful,) go out;" is appointed by the Constitutions called Apostolical [m], to stand with the subdeacon, at the door of the church, and hinder all the rest, who were not under penance, (and so bound to communicate,) "that they should not go out till they had received the holy sacrament."

And unto this pitch of perfection, if not higher, our first reformers desired to bring the service of the church. I say, 'if not higher,' because in the first communion book of Edward VI. there is a rubric which supposeth daily communion, not only in cathedrals, but in other places [n];" as there is another which takes care the people should be admonished and quickened, when they are "negligent to come to the communion upon the Sunday or holyday [o]." Which shows (as the learned person

[l] [Can. ix. apud Bevereg. Synodic. tom. i. p. 6 E. The following is the text of the three canons referred to by Zonaras.

Μέμνησθε δὲ ἐν τῷ προάγοντι χρόνῳ τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν κεκρικέναι, ἵνα εἴ τις λαϊκὸς ἐν πόλει διάγων τρεῖς κυριακὰς ἡμέρας ἐν τρισὶν ἑβδομάσι μὴ συνέρχοιτο, ἀποκινοῖτο τῆς κοινωνίας.—Conc. Sardic. II. A.D. 347. Mansi, tom. iii. col. 20 B.

Πάντας τοὺς εἰσιόντας εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν γραφῶν ἀκουόντας, μὴ κοινωνοῦντας δὲ εὐχῆς ἅμα τῷ λαῷ, ἢ ἀποστρεφομένους τὴν μετάληψιν τῆς εὐχαριστίας κατά τινα ἀταξίαν, τούτους ἀποβλήτους γίνεσθαι τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἕως ἂν ἐξομολογησάμενοι καὶ δείξαντες καρποὺς μετανοίας, καὶ παρακαλέσαντες, τυχεῖν δυνηθῶσι συγγνώμης.—Synod. Antioch. A.D. 341. can. 2. tom. ii. col. 1309 A.

Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος, ἢ πρεσβύτερος, ἢ διάκονος, ἢ τῶν ἐν κλήρῳ καταλεγομένων, ἢ λαϊκὸς, εἰ μηδεμίαν ἀνάγκην βαρυτέραν ἔχοι, ἢ πρᾶγμα δυσχερὲς, ὥστε ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀπολείπεσθαι τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐκκλησίας, ἀλλ', ἐν πόλει διάγων, τρεῖς κυριακὰς ἡμέρας ἐν τρισὶν ἑβδομάσι μὴ συνέρχοιτο, εἰ μὲν κληρικὸς εἴη καθαιρείσθω, εἰ δὲ λαϊκὸς ἀποκινείσθω τῆς κοινωνίας.—Synod. Quinisext. in Trullo, A. D. 680. can. 80. tom. xi. col. 977 C.]

[m] [Lib. viii. cap. 9.—Coteler. Patr. apost. tom. i. p. 400.]

[n] ["In cathedral churches, or other places where there is daily communion," &c.—Cardwell's Two books of Common Prayer, p. 275.]

[o] [Ibid.]

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above mentioned observes) that they affected the frequentation of this service according to the primitive pattern, so far as they thought it attainable: desiring that even upon other holydays, as well as Sundays, it should be celebrated; in the mother churches at least, as patterns and examples unto the rest. And thus much Mr. Calvin himself roundly declares (after he had commended the ancient custom of communicating daily, and condemned the custom of communicating only once a year as a diabolical invention) that the table of the Lord ought to be prepared for Christian people, at least once a week; and that all should be exhorted and stimulated (and the slothful chidden) to flock, as hungry people, unto such a banquet: as his words are in his fourth book of Institutions, c. xvii. n. 46 [p].

And so it is still enjoined, in one of our rubrics, that "in cathedral and collegiate churches and colleges, where there are many priests and deacons, they shall receive the communion every Sunday at least, except they have a reasonable cause to the contrary [q]." Now nothing, you have heard, was thought a reasonable cause in ancient time to keep any of the people from the communion, except such sins as threw them into the number of the penitents: for none of the rest were suffered to go out of the church, but stayed to receive it. Nay, such was the devout affection of the primitive Christians, while they remained one heart, and one soul, that they never celebrated the communion (as we learn from Justin Martyr [r] his first apology) but they sent it to those believers who were absent, (particularly to those whose bodily infirmities kept them from the public assemblies,) that they might have communion with the church; and it might appear, by their partaking of the same bread, that they were one body with those who were present.

And here let me briefly tell you, that this rubric or rule ought in reason to be the rather observed (as it will hereafter in this and other cathedrals), that the people who live near, or come upon occasion thither, may have frequent opportunity to communicate with the mother church: where anciently Christians were very desirous to receive this holy sacrament as oft as they could; that they might testify there was but *unum al-*

[p] [p. 381.] [q] [Rubric at the end of the Communion Service.]
[r] [Apol. i. § 65. p. 83 A. Compare Mensa Mystica, Sect. I. chap. 6. Vol. i. p. 168.]

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tare, 'one altar,' as they called it, one Christian society and communion, unto which they all belonged, and with whom they were in union: particular parishes in the diocese, being not distinct churches, but parts and members of one church, which is the mother church, from whence they all, in ancient time, did originally spring.

For so we find in the monuments of the church, that a bishop and his clergy having made conversions in some considerable part of a country, there they seated themselves, and from thence spread the gospel into neighbour places; who all looked upon themselves afterward as depending upon that one prime place, as a stream upon a fountain; which they owned by communicating there with the bishop and his clergy, as oft as it was possible for them so to do.

Thus it is apparent, by the history of the Acts of the holy Apostles, that the very first preachers of religion began in cities; and afterward carrying the glad tidings of the gospel into the adjacent towns and villages, those towns and villages looked upon themselves as but one church with that city, and thither repaired as oft as they could, to testify their unity therewith: especially at the high festivals, when anciently there was such a multitude came to receive, that in some places the church could not contain them. So we learn from a letter of Leo the First[s], bishop of Rome, to Dioscorus bishop of Alexandria, in the fifth century; where he advises him, that when any great festival makes the assembly more numerous, and there meets together so great a company of believers that one church cannot contain them, there is no question but "the oblation of the sacrifice must be renewed; when the first company is gone, and the church is filled again with the presence of a new assembly." And St. Austin tells us (in the famous epistle before named[t]) that the Thursday before Easter, the numbers of the people were so great in some places, that the sacrament was celebrated both morning and evening: whereas on that day the custom was to celebrate it only in the evening.

Which, as it shows the wonderful decay of devotion among us, in comparison with ancient times, so reproves that grand error which is now crept in among us, even among well-dis-

[s] [Epist. ix. cap. 2. tom. i. col. 631.]

[t] [Epist. liv. cap. 4. tom. ii. col. 126 A.]

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posed people, in many such places as this: where the people imagine, that if they communicate in the parish churches of the city where they live, they need take no notice at all of the cathedral there. No, they rather endeavour, and sometimes with a factious kind of zeal, to advance the credit of their parish churches, in opposition to that great church from which they all flowed, and on which they still depend.

This is quite out of the way of ancient religion, which taught men to bear the greatest regard to the mother church, where the principal pastor of their souls was seated (and thence called the cathedral) and to desire with him immediately to communicate, as oft as they had opportunity, or could conveniently.

For to do otherwise was, in effect, to throw off all respect to him, or very much to neglect him and his see; and was looked upon as the principle and beginning of schism, by breaking the unity of the church: and in time led men to that pestilent fancy which now very much prevails; that every parish church in the diocese is a distinct church, which hath all power within itself.

VI.

We therefore, who are priests and deacons, placed in a cathedral, should, above all others, be willing, nay, desirous to comply with the order of our church now recited; and not easily admit of any cause as a reasonable excuse for our forbearance. For, let me further acquaint you that, after the people contented themselves with receiving every Sunday at least, still the priests and the deacons, and such as were not entangled in secular business, continued the ancient custom of receiving the communion every day.

This we learn from Micrologus and Walafridus Strabo before mentioned, and the old book of Divine Offices in Cassander; and from Rhegino, who lived not much above seven hundred years ago: in whose book of Ecclesiastical Discipline we find this memorable record: that "if any priest, or deacon, or subdeacon, or any other of the clergy, being in a city, or a place where there was a church, did not come to the daily sacrifice, he should not any longer be accounted a clergyman, if, upon reprehension, he did not amend[u]."

[u] [Can. 183. p. 93. for which he quotes the fifth canon of the first Council of Toledo:— "Presbyter, vel diaconus, vel

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And can we think it unreasonable then to be tied unto less? which is, to attend upon this sacrifice (as it may be truly called in many respects) every Lord's day at the least? We should rather think it an honour and high privilege that we may wait upon him so oft at his altar; and look upon ourselves as bound to do him honour who hath so highly honoured us, by restoring this commemoration of him in his church, as near as we can, to its primitive perfection.

VII.

And, as a motive to it, let me now proceed to tell you that, when Christian people grew less frequent in receiving the holy communion, this neglect was attended with a great decay of holiness and good manners. As when they grew less devout, they grew more negligent in this holy duty; so this negligence produced great sloth and carelessness in all the other duties of a Christian life. For, becoming less sensible of their obligations to their Lord and Master Christ, who bade them thus remember him, they became unmindful of the rest of his commands, by forgetting this, which was intended for the making of a perpetual sacrifice of their souls and bodies to him. As we may be convinced, by observing what a wide difference there is between the first Christians and us in these days; that is, between them who had Christ continually in their thoughts, and us, who seldom remember him.

Then their thoughts were, in a manner, wholly employed in contriving how to get to heaven, and now all our thoughts are how to get as much as we can in this present uncertain world. Then they had but one soul in the whole body of Christians; and we are so many men, so many minds. Then they would lay down their lives one for another, now we kill and destroy, at least hate and bite, and are ready to devour one another. Then they were for doing all the good they could to others; now we are all for ourselves, and it is well if we be not contriving mischief, and doing injuries, or ill offices to our neighbours.

subdiaconus, vel quilibet ecclesiæ deputatus clericus, si intra civitatem fuerit, vel in loco in quo ecclesia, aut castello, aut vico, aut villa, et ad ecclesiam ad sacrificium quotidianum non accesserit, clericus non habeatur, si castigatus per satisfactionem veniam ab episcopo noluerit promereri."—Conc. Tolet. i. can. 5. Mansi, tom. iii. col. 999.]

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Then they feared no dangers, but now we are unwilling to suffer anything. Then they lived in absolute obedience to the worst of governors, but now we are apt to quarrel with just authority, and to find fault with everything that is done by our prince and our superiors.

Unto what can we more probably ascribe this difference than to their frequenting and our neglecting of the holy communion? In which opinion I am not singular, for Dr. Jackson, I remember[v], (sometime dean of this church,) thought it very likely "that the wars of kingdoms, the contentions in families, the infinite multitude of lawsuits, the personal hatreds, and the universal want of charity which hath made the world so miserable and so wicked, may, in a great degree, be attributed to the neglect of this great symbol and instrument of charity."

Which could not but closely knit us together in brotherly love and affection, if the nature of it were duly considered. For that is such, saith Mr. Calvin in the place before named[x], as shows it was not intended to be received once a year only, but to be in frequent use among Christians; that in a frequent memory they might repeat the passion of Christ; and by that commemoration support and strengthen their faith, praise the lovingkindness of God, and cherish mutual charity among themselves; nay, give a testimony of that one to another whose bond they beheld in the unity of the body of Christ. "For as oft as we communicate of the symbol of Christ's body, we strictly tie ourselves mutually one to another (by giving, as it were, and receiving a token and pledge thereof) to perform all the offices of love and kindness; so that none of us will do anything whereby our brother may receive any harm, nor omit anything whereby we may be helpful to him when his necessities require and our abilities are sufficient."

VIII.

And now, in the last place, I shall further show the great necessity of this duty, by representing to you this sad truth:

[v] [The author, trusting to his memory, generally so accurate, has in this instance been misled by it into attributing to Dr. Jackson a remark which he had with perfect correctness assigned in a previous work (Mensa Mystica, sect. i. chap. 6. vol. i. p. 280.) to bishop Jeremy Taylor. The passage occurs in that great writer's admirable Life of Christ, part. iii. sect. 15. disc. 19. §. 20. Works, vol. ii. p. 656.]

[x] [Above, p. 45.]

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that as the seldom celebration of the holy communion was attended with a lamentable decay of holy living, so thereby the Christian worship itself was no less wofully corrupted and depraved. For from hence have risen, I can clearly show, sundry dangerous corruptions in the Roman church; of which we complain very justly, but do not charge upon the right cause.

I will mention three or four.

1. First, the priest's communicating alone by himself, which, in truth, is no communion, arose from that gross negligence which I am now persuading you to amend.

The church of Rome hath thus far preserved a right notion of the holy communion as to conceive it to be a part of the daily service: upon which the people, as you have heard, attended, more or less, for some ages. But in process of time they, growing cold, left only the priests and deacons to communicate with him that ministered; and the priests and deacons also growing remiss, he was at last left alone. Who, in some places, continued to say all the prayers, and read the epistle and gospel, and all things else belonging to this service, until he came to the consecration, and there broke off; but, in other places, he ventured to proceed further; and consecrated and received the holy communion by himself alone. Which last way of proceeding being found most for the profit of the priests, it grew to be a custom in the Roman church for the priest that officiated to communicate alone when there was nobody to receive with him. For if there had been no communion, there would have been no offerings; and therefore they continued the communion, though there were none to communicate: nay, multiplied private masses, that there might be as many oblations as ever.

This is one corruption which hath most certainly sprung from the indevotion of Christian people.

2. Another, as bad or worse, is this,—the giving the holy communion in a wafer.

For the ancient custom being, as we read in Honorius Augustodunensis[y], for the several families in a town to bring to the priest the flour with which the *panis dominicus*, as he

[y] [Gemma Animæ, de Antiq. Rit. Miss. lib. i. cap. 66. in Max. Biblioth. Vet. Patr. tom. xx. p. 1055.]

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calls it, 'the Lord's bread,' was made; or else to join together to bring a loaf ready made by a common contribution to it, which was called their 'oblation,' and the 'host' (being for the representation of our Saviour's sacrifice on the cross); when the church was increased in number, but grew less in sanctity (as his words are) this loaf dwindled from a great one into a little one, according to the small number of communicants: till at last, there being no communicants at all, it shrunk up into a wafer, that is, a little thin bit of bread, in the form of a small piece of money, (the people offering such pieces of money instead of meal,) being just so much as the priest could eat himself when there was nobody to receive with him.

This is the original of wafers, which still retained the name of the 'host' after it was no longer the offering of the people, nor a representation of Christ's sacrifice: these wafers having brought in this corruption, that now there is no breaking of the bread in representation of the breaking of Christ's body. Though it be expressly mentioned in the institution of this sacrament, where we read that Christ *took bread and brake it*, &c. and is so much belonging to the essence, as we speak, of the sacrament, that the sacrament took its name from hence, and is called in Scripture *breaking of bread.*

Behold here again what Christian people have done by their indevotion: which hath given occasion to such a considerable depravation as this. For St. Paul, speaking of this part of the eucharist, calls it *the bread that we break*[z]; and our Lord himself, explaining the mystery of this bread, saith positively, *This is my body, which is broken for you*[a].

Which evidently shows that the bread ought then to be broken, or else it cannot be Christ's body broken for us; and therefore that this breaking of the bread is not such a superfluous thing as the church of Rome now makes it (for the bread is not broken there), but such a part of this sacrament as without it the sufferings of Christ upon the cross are not fully represented to us.

But thus, as I said, the negligence of Christian people in not frequenting the holy communion hath maimed this sacrament. Nay,

3. The doctrine of transubstantiation in all probability came

[z] 1 Cor. x. 16. [a] xi. 24.

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from the same original. For the priest being left alone at the communion, they found it necessary to magnify what he did there as much as it was possible, that so the people might bring their offerings more freely, though they did not receive together with him. And they magnified his operation so much, till at last it brought forth this prodigious conceit; that he held the very natural body and blood of Christ in his hands after the consecration. Which fancy obtained the more easily by the help of the wafers now mentioned; which having neither the form nor figure of bread, nor being like any sort of food used in the world, served to banish out of people's minds the thoughts of any such thing as bread, which they received in the holy communion.

See here again how men have spoiled our most excellent religion by neglecting the constant practice of it. For this doctrine of transubstantiating the bread into the very natural body of Christ is the more absurd, because in reality there is not so much as true bread presented unto the priest to transubstantiate, if such a feat could possibly be wrought. For the best Christians, after these wafers were introduced, looked upon them as unfit for consecration, being unworthy of the name of *bread*, and not being at all *broken*, and therefore did *ad Christum et ecclesiam nihil pertinere*, 'not at all belong to Christ or his church;' as Bernoldus, a priest of Constance, adventured to speak in the eleventh century. For he is that ancient writer whom Cassander mentions as the "expounder of the Roman order," and commends as a pious, prudent person, and well skilled in the ecclesiastical traditions, excepting only the indignation he expressed at the reducing the oblations of bread for the use of the sacrifice into this form of wafers, much different from the form of true bread, which he called therefore in contempt "mites of nummulary oblations," (being in the form of little pieces of money,) and ascribes to them an "imaginary shadowy lightness," which deserve not the name of bread, they are so thin; and inveighs against them in more and sharper words than these, which Cassander (in his book of Liturgics, cap. 27[z]) saith he thought it not expedient to transcribe in

[z] [Minutias nummulariarum oblatarum appellat, imaginariam et umbratilem levitatem illis tribuit, et indignas esse panis vocabulo pro sua tenuitate.—p. 61.]

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that place. But what he hath transcribed abundantly shows how wise and good men resented this change in the sacrament, "by reason of which the divine service and the religion of the ecclesiastical office," as that author speaks, "was much every way confounded."

4. Lastly, this very thing hath turned the holy communion in that church into a propitiatory sacrifice, offered up to God both for the quick and the dead. Which hath proved a most horrible abuse, having no other original than that now named; the people's not communicating, but leaving the priest alone at the altar. Who, being loath to lose the oblations as well as the people's company, began to speak very high things of the saving efficacy which from this action of the priest alone redounded even unto those who did not communicate with him.

Which opinion being once received as a popular conceit, men gave money freely and abundantly for private masses, out of a persuasion that thereby they should procure remission of sins, both for themselves and for others, both for those alive and those who were dead.

By which things I hope you see the great mischief of neglecting the holy communion, which hath even undone the Christian world; for it hath spoiled Christ's holy religion, and turned it into quite another thing, by most gross depravations of it.

Which have had this effect even upon us who are called *reformed*, that they have rooted out the principal part of God's service from among us, and made it lame and imperfect. For the church of Rome having retained the custom of celebrating the communion every day, but turned it into a sacrifice for the quick and the dead, though none but the priest partake of it; this is the use which the enemy of mankind hath tempted us to make of their abuses: to persuade ourselves that so long as private masses are abolished, we need not trouble ourselves to be frequent in the celebration and communion of the eucharist.

Now this is even according to the heart's desire of our grand adversary the devil; who can be content with such a reformation as this, while we retain the very root and foundation of all the abuses which we have reformed; viz. negligence in frequenting this holy sacrament. Which I hope we shall be

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careful also to reform at last, if men will but lay to heart such things as I have laid before their eyes.

Which let us see, that though the particular time of communicating be not named in Christ's institution, yet that is no argument we may take our own time for it, and do not offend God so it be done some time or other; but quite contrary, that our Lord intended it should be performed at all times when we assemble for divine service. Thus the first and best Christians understood it, thus they practised and transmitted this practice unto posterity, who for some ages continued it; and though it be not continued till these times, yet we are forced to acknowledge, that the remembrance it importeth (as that excellent man Mr. Thorndike speaks[a]) is so proper, so peculiar to the profession we make, that "our assemblies never look so like the assemblies of Christians as when it is celebrated;" but are really naked without it, or at least want the crown of that service for which we assemble, that most excellent piece of service which is peculiarly appropriated to the worship of our blessed Lord and Saviour. By the neglect of which, the love of God and the love of one another is deplorably decayed, and the Christian religion also so depraved, that they who reformed it in many things have not been able to restore it to its integrity.

And therefore, now that God hath put it into the heart of our pious metropolitan to call upon us and enjoin us to live more strictly according to the rules and orders of our religion, by celebrating the holy communion at all our more solemn assemblies[b]; I hope none of us will be any longer disobedient and refractory to so godly a motion, but rather forward to comply with the command of God and of our governors.

It may not be in the power of man perhaps so to command

[a] ["Of the Laws of the church," chap. i. § 2. Works, vol. iv. p. 3: and see the passage referred to above, p. 43.]

[b] [From this passage, as well as from a similar allusion in the Epistle Dedicatory to the present treatise, and in the author's account of the circumstance in his Autobiography, it would appear that archbishop Sancroft had, recently, by a circular letter or otherwise, urged the institution of weekly communions in the cathedral churches of the province of Canterbury. No such document however seems to be at present extant; nor do any of the earlier notices of Sancroft's life, that in the Biographia Britannica, &c., or any of the authorities cited by Dr. D'Oyley in his recent biography of the archbishop, contain any reference to it. The editor has examined in vain for the same purpose the MS. Register of the archbishop in the library of Lambeth Palace.]

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the occasions of this world as that all should be always disposed to communicate; yet in so great a number as here come together to worship God, there cannot but always some persons or other be found who are not so encumbered, but they may be fit if they please to receive the holy communion with us. Certain I am it ought so to be; and what ought to be, may be and will be if the reason upon which it depends be duly considered. If it be not, so that for want of persons disposed to communicate the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood cannot be celebrated every Sunday, it is a wilful neglect, for which nothing can be alleged but too much love of this world; which arises from too little a sense of the love of our blessed Saviour, and too small valuation of his inestimable benefits.

Which I beseech you, let us awaken our minds to weigh and ponder, and then we shall make it part of our business, to contrive our affairs in this world in such a manner, that there never want some company at the holy communion. And it is no hard matter so to order things, that some receiving one Sunday, some another, all may receive at least once a month.

What should hinder, if we have any mind to it, and will set ourselves about it? what can stand in the way of such a blessed and comfortable reformation as this? Of which though we have not heard a word from the great pretenders to religion, in an age wherein so much hath been talked of the reformation of the church, yet all the true children of it, who understand and seek its good are sensible, that the continual celebration of the eucharist, and the discipline of penance to preserve the people in a disposition fit to receive it, "are such points of reformation in the church (as the great man before named expresses it) that without restoring these, all the rest is but mere noise and pretence, if not mischief."

And these are the things at which the order of our church aims, for as it earnestly sighs and groans (as you read in the Commination) towards the restoring of public penance, (which is the only means established by the apostles to maintain the church in condition to communicate continually,) so it enjoins, as you have heard, the continual celebration of the eucharist "in cathedral and collegiate churches and colleges every Sunday at the least;" which supposes it would be still more agreeable to its desires if it were done also upon other festivals.

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Now what should hinder us, I ask again, from coming thus near to the primitive devotion, though we do not come up quite to the utmost perfection of it? Unless it be the fancy which works in many minds, that to communicate "three times in the year" (as the church enjoins every parishioner "at the least" to do[c]) is sufficient for any Christian. Which may well be called a fancy, since it is manifest the church names three times in a year as the very lowest degree of devotion, less than which it would account profaneness: and I have demonstrated, that we have little or nothing to say for our communicating so seldom as once a month, but only this, that in most places it is no oftener administered.

In the mother churches it will hereafter be more frequently, which will, in some measure, conform us to those ancient churches which communicated every Sunday. For all the country churches in the diocese being but parts of the mother church, it may be truly said, the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood is administered once a week in all our churches.

Where I beseech you let us never want a competent number of communicants: and, that we may not, do not any longer imagine that you show sufficient respect to our Saviour if you resolve to come thrice a year. I wish every one were careful of doing so much; but, let me further tell you, they that set themselves such a stint will be in danger too oft to fall short of that: and therefore it is far safer, and more becoming, to aim at, and endeavour after higher attainments, by coming more frequently to the table of the Lord.

Hear how sharply that great person St. Chrysostom inveighs against those that contented themselves with receiving only at the festivals, especially at Easter. It is in his third sermon upon the Epistle to the Ephesians[d], where having expounded the last words of the first chapter, which represent our blessed Lord as the *Head of the church, advanced far above all principalities and powers*, &c. he thus begins his sermon:

"Let us reverence our Head; let us think with ourselves of what Head we are the body: a Head to which all things are

[c] [Rubric at the end of the Communion service.]

[d] [§. 3. tom. xi. p. 20.]

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subject. What an honour is this, to be, in some sort, viz. in our Head, advanced above the angels and archangels! .... Let us reverence then this kindred, this affinity which we have with Christ our Head. Let us fear lest any of us be cut off from this body; lest any of us fall away; lest we appear unworthy of our relation to him.

"If anybody had set a diadem or a crown of gold upon our head, would we not have laboured by all means not to appear unworthy of those lifeless stones? And yet, now that there is not so little as a diadem put upon our Head, but Christ himself, which is infinitely more, is become our head, we make no account at all of it. The angels reverence it, the archangels and all the heavenly powers do him honour: we only who are his body, neither for this reason nor for the other, have any considerable regard to him.

"What hope then is there of our salvation? Think upon that royal throne; think upon that exceeding great honour God hath conferred upon thee; and it will be more powerful than hellfire itself to affright thee into a due regard towards him."

With a great many more suchlike efficacious words (which I do but abridge) he presses his people to the greatest purity of life; and then, at last, comes in particular to press them from this argument to a religious care of receiving the holy communion.

"I see," saith he[e], "many of you receive the body of Christ, but it is rather from custom, and for order's sake, than out of reason and understanding. If it were the holy time of Lent, saith one, or if it were the Epiphany (that is, Christmas day[f]), saith another, who would not prepare himself to partake of the holy mysteries? Is it then Christmas, is it the time of Lent, that makes a man a worthy receiver? I thought it had been sincerity of soul, holiness and purity of life. With these come always: without these thou hast no right to come at all. *For as oft as you do this, you show the Lord's death* (quoting my text), that is, you make a commemoration of the salvation wrought for you, and of the benefits Christ bestowed upon you.

"Consider then how abstemious, how careful were they

[e] [§. 4. p. 22.]

[f] [See the note of the Benedictine editor on the passage, and Bingham, Antiq. Book xx. chap. 4. §. 2.]

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who did partake of the old sacrifices under the Law. What did they not do? What expense were they not willing to make? They were always purifying themselves, that they might partake of the altar. But thou, coming to a sacrifice at which the angels are astonished, circumscribest the business, and confinest it to certain periods of time. (Thou wilt receive it at Easter, at Christmas; then thou wilt be pure and clean to partake of it.) But how wilt thou appear before the tribunal of the Lord Jesus, who darest with impure hands and lips to touch his body? .... For so it is: at other times you will not come, no not though you be pure; but at Easter you will needs come, though you have lately perhaps been bold to commit some great transgression.

"O the power of custom! or rather, O the power of presumption! The daily sacrifice is in vain; we stand at the altar to no purpose; there is nobody to partake with us; but then (at Easter) abundance of company by all means will crowd in upon us, though as unworthy as at any other time.

"I do not speak this that you should receive without any more ado, but that you would prepare yourselves to receive worthily oftener than you do: considering, if thou art unworthy of the sacrifice, if thou art unworthy to partake, how art thou worthy to pray with us?

"Thou hearest the public officer making proclamation, 'All ye that are under penance depart[8].' They then that do not partake are under penance. If thou art one of those, thou oughtest not to partake: for he that partaketh not is in the number of the penitents. To what purpose doth he proclaim, 'Depart, all ye that cannot pray,' (viz. with the faithful,) and yet thou impudently stayest, and dost not depart?

"But thou art none of those, and therefore thou dost not depart: that is, thou art in the number of those that may receive, and art invited to it, and yet thou regardest it not, thou makest no account of this matter.

"Mind, I beseech you. There is a royal table spread; the angels minister there; the King himself is present, and thou standest gaping carelessly, refusing to partake with him. What a shame is this! Dost thou appear there in filthy garments,

[8] [Ὅσοι ἐν μετανοίᾳ, ἀπέλθετε πάντες.]

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and art nothing concerned about it? No, thy raiment is pure: why then dost thou not approach and partake? How comest thou to be here, if that be not thy business? For all that are in their sins are first thrust out; and therefore thou that stayest ought to partake of the mysteries, or else thou art impudent and wicked too. Had it not been better, if a man, invited to feast with a great person, had not appeared, than to come and not to touch a bit of the meat? Even so it is with thee; thou art come to this holy banquet, thou hast sung the hymn with all the rest; by this very thing thou professest thyself in the number of the worthy, in that thou didst not depart with the unworthy: how comes it to pass then, that when thou stayest thou dost not partake of the Lord's table?

"I am unworthy, thou sayest. Then, I say again, thou art unworthy of that communion which is in the prayers: for not only for the holy mysteries, but for the prayers also, and for the hymns, the Spirit descends always."

A great deal more, saith he[h], might be added (as indeed he doth say much more, which I have omitted), but that I may not burden your minds, this may suffice. And they that are not reclaimed and brought to a better mind by what hath been said, will not be mended though we should say never so much.

And these things are said by us; but, O that he who pierces the heart, he that gives the spirit of compunction, would vouchsafe to prick every one of our hearts! That these things may be deeply engrafted there, and, in his fear, sprout and bring forth fruit: so that with all confidence and freedom we may approach unto him, and it may be said as it is in the Psalms (though to a different sense), *Thy children are like olive branches round about thy table.*

[h] [p. 24.]

The end of the second Discourse.

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DISCOURSE III.

A RESOLUTION OF DOUBTS

ABOUT RECEIVING THE

HOLY COMMUNION.

The necessity of this holy duty, the high obligations we have unto it, and the reasons why it ought to be frequently performed by Christian people, have been so fully and so plainly laid before you in the two preceding discourses, that I cannot but think all that will take the pains to consider them must be convinced both of the one and of the other; of the duty, and of the repetition of it frequently.

For I have shewn that it is a part of the daily service which Christ appointed in his church, a principal part of that service, whereby we maintain our communion with him and with his benefits; and therefore cannot be neglected, as now it generally is, without the greatest offence to him, and as great dishonour to our holy religion. Which I have demonstrated hath been many ways corrupted and depraved by the lamentable carelessness of Christian people in this great office of it. Who must be persuaded therefore, if they make any conscience of their ways, to resolve to do this in remembrance of their Saviour oftener than they have done.

And what impediment there can be to the putting such resolutions in execution I cannot imagine, unless it be some particular exceptions which they in their own private thoughts take, not against the duty, but against their performance of it, at least for the present. For how necessary, how beneficial soever it be in itself and may be unto others, yet unto them

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some fancy it is not so; but rather they ought to forbear the communion until they be satisfied about some things in which they are doubtful. For while those doubts and scruples remain in their minds unremoved, they think they have a just reason to hinder them from coming to the Lord's table; nay, they say they dare not come for fear of offending the divine Majesty, and so persuade themselves they are as religious in staying away as others may be in going thither.

Now these exceptions which they make against their performance of this duty are generally drawn from one of these three heads:

I. First, from the form or manner wherein the holy communion is now administered in our church.

II. Secondly, from the company to whom it is administered, and with whom it must be received.

III. Thirdly, from the person himself who is called upon to receive it, who judges himself altogether unfit for so solemn a duty.

Unto all which I doubt not to make a satisfactory answer, if men be as willing to be rid of their scruples as to retain them; but shall most largely endeavour to satisfy the last, because it is the greatest and most weighty.

I.

About the first of these (the form or manner wherein the holy communion is administered in this church) a long discourse cannot be expected, for it is not proper in this place. Nor is there any need at all of it; but it may suffice to say a very few things in answer to it.

For let it but be considered, first, how various the minds of men are, how weak and captious, which disposes them too oft to boggle at everything with which they have not had a long acquaintance, and then you will, next of all, grant me that it is impossible for any man beforehand to know or imagine till he speak with them what such minds will object or scruple about this matter. For some have a fancy against one thing,

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some against another; that which one allows, another disapproves; and that which he disapproves, another allows; and the very best constitutions, it is possible, are disapproved by many narrow, weak, and scrupulous minds.

Now this being granted, which cannot be denied, that it is impossible in so many several ways wherein several men wander to trace every man's errors, find out his particular conceits, and pursue him from scruple to scruple till no more be started; all that is pertinent to be said in this case will be reduced to so small a compass, that there is but one advice only which can be given for such men's satisfaction; which is this,

That seeing it is certainly our Christian duty to communicate together at the Lord's table in some form, manner, and method or other; they that are dissatisfied with that order and method which our church uses ought in conscience to apply themselves to their spiritual pastors privately, and make known to them their objections against it, with a mind ready and desirous to receive satisfaction. For in an age which abounds with such various fancies and conceits as we sometimes meet withal, no minister of Christ can be able to guess, before he confer with them, what every one of his flock will object to the present established way of worship; and therefore cannot out of the pulpit attempt an answer to them without running the hazard of speaking at random and beating the air; in guessing that to be objected which is not, or omitting that which is; and which, perhaps, he could not imagine would have been objected. For which reasons, it is impossible even for the press itself to meet with every particular exception, though a large book should be written on the subject.

And therefore the short, the sure, and the easy way to certain satisfaction is, for every one that hath any thing to say against the manner and form of divine administrations among us which hinder him from communicating, to address himself to his spiritual guide, whom God hath set over him (or to some other discreet and learned minister of God's word), and to lay open his whole mind before him, that he may free him from his scruples.

Unto this every man is bound, because he is bound to communicate, but cannot, he says, till these scruples be removed; which therefore he ought to endeavour to have removed, by

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this means, which is of God's own prescription. And being used uprightly, with a sincere desire to be rightly informed and a humble willingness to learn, and being continued with constancy from time to time, and not presently laid aside because the mind is not immediately convinced, will, I doubt not, by God's blessing, in the issue dispossess that man of his doubts, and bring him to conformity who seriously tries it with patience.

II.

As for the second head, from whence objections are drawn against the practice of this Christian duty, viz. the company which partakes at the table of the Lord, which some perhaps think unfit for them to communicate withal; I shall answer to it a little more largely.

1. And first, I take it to be undoubtedly certain, that no man or woman who professes and understands Christianity, and do not contradict their profession by a profane and scandalous conversation, can lawfully be denied the holy communion when they present themselves to receive it. For who were they for whom Christ prepared this table, but his disciples? And what other rule have we whereby to judge who are his disciples, but only by men's professing Christianity, and by their living (for anything that appears to the contrary) suitable to this profession? If such as these may not be admitted to the holy communion (and consequently we receive with such) then none are to be admitted, but we must turn all people whatsoever from it; and so, breaking all Christian communion for want of company to partake of this sacrament, extinguish the ordinance itself which Christ hath most solemnly appointed.

2. Now this being settled as a well-grounded truth, it follows that no good Christian can be forward to judge others to be unworthy to communicate, but rather will be very scrupulous lest he offend in so judging. For it is so much against the rules of Christianity to pass such censures on others, that they who are too forward to do it are as unworthy for any thing that I can see as any other persons whom they censure: because they act contrary to the Christian religion, which makes it a sin to be hasty in condemning our neighbours, there being such great danger that we may be mistaken.

For though a man have contradicted his Christian profession

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in some things, yet this is a truth wherein we all agree; that whosoever is a true penitent, and purposes to leave those sins whereby he hath contradicted it, is by that repentance restored to friendship with God, and therefore really worthy to receive the holy communion. Now whether a man whom you judge unworthy have this serious settled purpose or no, is very hard for you to know, since you cannot see into any man's heart, nor know what is between God and him in secret. But he coming to the Lord's table, you ought rather to judge that he doth so purpose and resolve, because he is invited thither upon those terms and no other; nay, required to come so prepared, or else not dare to approach unto it. For so you find it, in the Exhortation that is read, when the minister giveth warning for the celebration of the holy sacrament. And so he speaks again at the time of the celebration, in those known words:

"Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort."

3. And that leads to the next. Our church, you see, proceeds according to the undoubted rule I named at first; for its constitutions do not admit but exclude all scandalous persons from this holy sacrament: and therefore you ought not to depart from its communion when any minister thereof doth admit such evil livers to it; because it is his personal fault, who alone is to be charged with it, and not any fault of the church, which ought not to bear the blame, nor upon this account to be forsaken.

Nay, that minister himself perhaps may not be in fault, having no knowledge of the scandal, and therefore not to be blamed.

And more than this, he perhaps who complains of the scandal is the very man upon whom this blame will light at last: for if he knew of any such notorious evil liver, who was admitted to the communion, his duty was not thereupon to withdraw himself from it, but to make proof of the scandal whereof such a man stood guilty; that he might not, without amendment and open declaration of his repentance, be admitted to it

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again. Which this exceptioner neglecting to do, his abstaining from the communion because of such offence is the effect of his own negligence in another duty of Christianity; and so he becomes doubly guilty, both in withdrawing himself from the holy communion, and in not acquainting those with the crimes (which he pretends for the cause of his withdrawing) who were concerned to redress them.

4. And, lastly, suppose that, after information given, they who are concerned do not take care to redress those things, but such scandalous livers be still admitted to the communion; yet, this not being the fault of private persons, but of those who have power to exclude them, it ought not to keep any good man or woman from the table of the Lord: for there can be no reason why any man should be hindered by this from doing his own duty, because another man doth not discharge his.

And let it here be seriously considered, that if this were a just hinderance it would have hindered Christ, and his apostles, and the primitive Christians from communicating. For there was ill company among the very first communicants; Judas the traitor, in all likelihood, being there when our Lord himself administered. And in this church of Corinth it is evident there were such disorders that many did eat and drink their own damnation; and yet it did not hinder good Christians from partaking with them to their salvation.

And the very truth is, if this were a sufficient reason to hinder us from communion, it ought also to hinder us from being Christians, and make us forbear to become members of any church or profession: for there is no church but consists of a mixed multitude, good and bad, and therefore compared by our Saviour unto a net, wherein all sorts of fish were caught[a]; and unto a field, wherein wheat and tares sprung up, which must grow together till the harvest, lest by an indiscreet endeavour to gather up the tares, the wheat be also rooted up with them[b].

And therefore this scruple driven home will destroy Christianity, as it hath done in some places; where men have divided and subdivided, till, by their separation from them

[a] Matt. xiii. 47, 48. [b] Ver. 24, 25, 29, 30.

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whom they accounted wicked, they have crumbled into nothing, and left no church at all remaining but what was in their particular person: that is, none; for the church is a society; and there is no society, nor can be any, but we may find some exception or other against every person in it; and particularly against such persons who, judging others unworthy to communicate with them, abstain on that account from the holy communion.

For, besides the suspicion of rash judging and pride that is in the thing, they are apparently guilty of a gross sin, in not coming to the holy communion of Christ's body and blood, according to his commandment: the secret reason of which, perhaps, they do not declare; and so others have as much authority to judge them unworthy as they to judge others: and by this means all of them, if this be a just excuse, may let the holy communion alone.

I hope you see, by this short discourse, whither such exceptions as these lead: and therefore that you will no longer be guided by them; but, notwithstanding the faults you think you can find in any person there present, be persuaded, by the weighty reasons you see for it, to do your own duty at the table of the Lord:

III.

Where we should have more company than is usually seen there, were it not for another hindrance, arising, not from others, but from men's selves alone; who are wont sometimes to say, We would come to the table of the Lord, being convinced it is our duty, if we were worthy of so great a benefit; but we are deterred from it by the consideration of our many sins or great frailties. We have, at least, too many diversions by business, too many avocations by the affairs of this world: for I am alway in a hurry, saith one; I have no leisure to examine myself; or I am not disposed for so serious a work, saith another. We had better forbear than be rash, say all of this sort: it is safer to honour the sacrament by a fearful and reverent abstinence from it, than, by a careless and unprepared forwardness to partake of it, profane it. In a word, we conceive ourselves to be utterly unfit, therefore we dare not come to it.

Now, in answer to this third exception against the perform-

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ance of this duty, which hath a show of humility in it, and looks like a pious care not to do good things in an ill manner, I have many things to propound to your consideration; which are so convincing, and will so unmask the dangerous deceit that lurks under such pretences, that they will not suffer you to be cheated by it any longer.

i. And, in the first place, every one who complains of his unfitness, and makes that the reason of his not coming to the holy communion, ought to consider both whose fault this is, and whether it be not likely he shall grow still more unfit every day than other; that is, be more in fault by not receiving it. For you will not, you cannot say it is our Saviour's fault, who commands you to come, that you are not fit to come to it. Whose fault is it then but your own? and why do you not then amend it, lest you still grow greater strangers to him, nay, enemies, by evil works, and by continuing to neglect the means of living better?

For this very unfitness, which you allege for your forbearing the communion, is your sin; and will you turn your sin into an apology, and make it serve for your plea for the neglect of a plain duty? Can you think that this will pass at the bar of the Divine judgment when you appear before it? Dare you thus excuse your neglect of the sacrament by acknowledging another crime? When an accusation, a just accusation, lies against you, will you then go about to turn it into a defence of yourself, as you are bold to do now?

I come not to the holy communion, it is true, but it is because I am unholy; I am sensible of the looseness of my life, which is not strict enough; I am not in charity; or, at best, I am worldly-minded, and too much distracted with the affairs of this life.

This is the plea of some men; who do not mind how, after a strange manner, they make one sin an excuse for another. For this is the plain sense of their plea;—God, we hope, will be merciful to us in forgiving one sin because we commit another which is the cause thereof; pardon, that is, the neglect of the sacrament, because they neglect to fit themselves for it. For none can deny that it is one sin not to commemorate the death of Christ, as he hath appointed; and it is also another, to

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neglect a due preparation for it. And so instead of amending one, such men add another to it; heaping evil upon evil, and aggravating their condemnation by their very pleas and excuses.

Of which they could not be thus senselessly guilty, were this plain truth duly considered,—that there is the same reason to be scrupulous about this unfitness, whereof they complain, that there is to be so about their unworthy receiving; and yet they take no notice of the one any further than only to make it an excuse for the other. What unjust, what partial dealing is this! What kind of Christians are these, who, if they were serious and in good earnest religious (as some of this sort would be thought to be), would be as afraid to remain unfit as they are to receive while they so continue? they would be as scrupulous lest they should offend God by staying away, as they seem to be lest they should offend him by coming to the communion: for they would see that it is very unequal dealing with God, and with their own souls, to be very nice about the doing that which God hath commanded, and to have little or no scruple about the omission of it. What is this but to fancy that when God commands a thing to be done by us, we may safely let it alone, if our not doing it proceed from a fear of doing it wrong? as if we did not offend him by not doing what he bids us as much as by doing it amiss, and our total neglect of a duty were not as great a provocation as an undue performance.

Do but consider it thoroughly, and you will find there is as much cause to be solicitous about the one as about the other. And if all they that are now full of fears about unworthy receiving, would but be fearful also of continuing unworthy to receive, (i. e. of sinful neglect of the holy communion,) this equal fear on both sides would make them solicitously diligent in fitting themselves to be worthy guests at the Lord's table. That so they may neither offend by coming, nor by staying away; but approach in a becoming and well-prepared manner, and find grace and favour with God to come every day more and more prepared.

For, by coming as well prepared as our affairs in this world will admit, with serious resolutions to amend our lives, we grow still more fit if we frequent it, to come better disposed to the

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table of the Lord, with stronger resolutions, and consequently with more fruits meet for repentance or amendment of life. For, by doing our duty as well as we can, we learn to do it with greater perfection, especially if we continue to do it, though for the present with many imperfections.

But alas! will some say, we are not only utterly unfit and unprepared for the present, but it is not in our power to fit and prepare ourselves in any sort to be meet partakers of these holy mysteries for the future.

To which it is necessary that I say something before I proceed further; because, if this be true, all my labour will be lost in persuading men to dispose themselves for the performance of this holy duty.

1. And here the same question might be asked such persons which I asked at the first, how comes it not to be in your power, and whose fault is it, that you are not able to fit yourselves? But I omit this, because it only throws the guilt upon such complainers, but doth not convince them of the falseness of their plea. Therefore I rather demand of such men, how they can pretend to Christianity, and say that they cannot leave off their habitual course of sinning?

What! is there no power in the Christian religion to alter a man's heart, and to bring him to repentance and reformation of life? Cannot he who, by being made a Christian, is "regenerate with the Holy Spirit[c]," cease to follow and to be led by those carnal lusts and worldly desires which, at his baptism, he renounced? Cannot he, for instance, forbear habitual drunkenness, swearing, extortion, and profaneness? Is it impossible for him to be at peace with his neighbours? to lay aside all wrath, bitterness, and wilful animosities? How is he then born again of the Spirit? By what power were men changed and renewed in the beginning of our religion, which we have not now, since we have the same religion? Or to what purpose are we exhorted every day to beseech God to "grant us true repentance, and his Holy Spirit, that those things which we do at that present may please him; and the

[c] [Thanksgiving after baptism,— "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate these infants with thy Holy Spirit," &c.]

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rest of our life be pure and holy," if no such thing can be obtained from our heavenly Father; no, not by importunate prayers unto him for it?

Do not, for shame, say any longer you have no power to fit yourselves for the holy communion, that is, to become better; unless you will renounce Christianity, and declare there is nothing in it but vain words, empty shows, and appearances.

2. Which this sort of men, I am sure, cannot do, having something in them which will satisfy them, if they attend unto it, that they do not say true, when they pretend they cannot leave off those sins which keep them from the communion. For how can they be called sins, if it be impossible to do otherways? And if they be no sins, how can they hinder you from communicating? Why do your consciences accuse you of doing amiss, if you could not but do as you did? They never accuse you in other cases, where there is an utter impossibility under which you labour. For instance, if a neighbour's house be on fire, you do not accuse yourself for not running to help to quench it, when you lay lame in bed, and disabled to move out of it. But if you set the house on fire, you could not but think you did him a great injury: or if you stood by in perfect health and soundness, when it took fire, and would not stir hand or foot to help him, you could not but look upon yourself as unneighbourly, unkind, and cruel. In like manner, if it were as impossible to forbear a sin as it is to stir when you are bound hand and foot, your consciences would never accuse you. But the upbraidings you feel there, the secret checks and remorse, the suspicions and fears which your consciences are troubled withal, plainly declare that it was in your power; and that you *lie, and do not the truth*, (as St. John speaks[d],) when you pretend the contrary.

In short, if you cannot possibly reform those sins, which make you unfit for the communion, how come you to charge them upon yourselves as sins? If they be sins, your own consciences tell you that you can avoid them; and if you can, why do you not go about it? and by doing this, prepare yourselves to do the other; I mean, to receive the holy communion;

[d] [1 John i. 6.]

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for which you will be fit when you have quitted those sins wherein you live?

3. For the sins which you say you cannot reform are either sins of weakness or sins of wilfulness. If they be only such weaknesses as can scarce possibly be avoided by the care and watchfulness of good men, but they are, upon some occasions, surprised with them, surely these do not make you unfit for the holy communion; for then all men living, for aught we know, must be unfit. If they be sins of wilfulness, then you do, in these very words, confess that they may be reformed: for wilful sins, in the judgment of all mankind, are such as, by care, and diligence, and watchfulness over ourselves, may be avoided. As wilful drunkenness is not being intoxicated with some liquor of whose strength we were ignorant, but losing the government of ourselves when we were aware of the danger, and could have prevented it.

4. But this, in effect, hath been said already; and therefore, to bring this matter to a speedy issue, let such as say they have no power to prepare themselves for the communion, by amending their lives, consider that every man hath power to do what he can do. To say otherways is a contradiction; for it is to say he cannot do what he can. Now, do what you can, and I will undertake God shall not charge you with what you cannot. But if you do not what you are able, you will be charged both with that and with the guilt of not doing that unto which in time you might have been enabled. For God hath promised that they who seek shall find; that he will open to them that knock, and graciously answer them that call upon him faithfully. Why then do you not address yourself to the doing that which you certainly can do? for instance, call upon God, and earnestly importune him for the help of his grace (which is a thing you can do): for, in so doing, God will not be wanting to you, but enable you to that which, for the present, it may not be in your power to do.

5. Unto which (lastly) let this be added, which is of great moment. You that say you cannot prepare yourselves for the holy communion—have you ever tried? have you gone about

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the work, and made a serious and hearty attempt towards the reformation of yourselves? If you have not, how come you to be so bold as to say you cannot do that which you have not yet tried and endeavoured to do? What a prevarication is this with God and your own consciences! though I doubt this is the case of most of those men who plead inability, when they never in good earnest made an experiment what might be done in the use of such means as God hath appointed, and are in our power to use.

But if you have tried, and miscarried, why did you not try again; and after that, again and again; and that with greater diligence and care than before? For this you could have done; and why should it be judged reasonable in our worldly affairs to attempt over and over again the same thing wherein we have failed at the first, in hope of better success at last: and not be thought fit, nay, why should we not be willing to use the same repeated diligence, notwithstanding suchlike discouragement in the weighty concernments of our souls?

And since we find by experience we can do the one, for we do it, we ought to conclude that we can, if we set ourselves to it, do the other. For a soul can do more for itself than for anything else; if it will but consider what a valuable being it is, and where its true interest lies; in the love and favour of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the first answer to the pretence of unfitness. And what was last said, may serve for an answer also to those that complain of hardness of heart, and want of affection in the performance of this holy duty. Let them do it as well as they are able; and they will find acceptance with God, and grow more affected with his love. And for an answer to those also that say they are never the better for coming to this sacrament; it is certain they were something the better, by their very coming thither, if they did not come without a resolution of amendment; for that resolution was a good thing, and the work of God's grace. Which though they did not keep, they should not thereby have been discouraged from coming again, but rather have renewed it; which had been still a better thing. And they ought not to have given over the attempt, upon a new miscarriage; but still laboured and endeavoured to settle this resolution so steadfastly, by constant renewals of

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their covenant with Christ, that at last it might have stood unmovable in all those temptations which were wont to overthrow it.

This is the way of Christ; not to sit down contented with complaints of our unfitness to have communion with him; but never to rest satisfied, till by our earnest and repeated endeavours we be better disposed.

ii. And there is this great reason to enforce such endeavours, which these complainers would do well to lay to heart: that if they be unfit for this holy duty, of commemorating the death of Christ, and receiving the tokens and pledges of his love, they have no cause to think themselves fit for other holy duties, which are confessed by all to be of daily use; viz. for prayer, for thanksgiving, and praising God: which duties, if men be not fit to perform, they ought to look upon themselves as not fit to live in the world, or to go out of it; but if they be not unfit for these, then how can they say they are unfit for this? since our part in the holy communion is wholly performed by devout prayer, and praise and thanksgiving, with such faith and love and holy resolutions as ought always to accompany those holy actions. And our part being thus performed, what reason have we to think that God will not perform his, by accounting us worthy to receive those blessings which he there imparts? For he is always more ready to give than we are to receive; and we are not unmeet to receive, when we are thus disposed to ask.

To this purpose, you may remember, I alleged St. Chrysostom's words in my former Discourse. "Art thou not worthy to partake of the sacrifice? then art thou not worthy neither to pray; but thou oughtest to depart when the deacon cries, 'Begone all you that are in penance,'" &c. For the holy communion is a special way of praying and making supplication to God, through Christ Jesus: for which they cannot be unfit who are fit to pray to God in his name at all.

No, I am apt to think that many men who pretend this do not really think themselves unfit; but use it only as a shift to excuse themselves from the performance of their duty. For should the minister of God upon this score keep those from the communion who now keep themselves from it, saying to

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them (as of old), "Begone, you are not fit to partake with us;" they would take it very heinously at his hands, and be apt to reply: We are as fit as many whom you admit to partake with you; you do us an injury in thrusting us away from the table of the Lord, where we see those entertained that are no better than ourselves.

For which ill resentment of such a supposed judgment passed upon them, what reason can be given but this, that they have no such opinion of their own unfitness? For if they had, they would be pleased rather than angry that other men are of their mind; as they desire they should be in other cases. They would be far from looking upon it as an indignity, to be told they are not fit to communicate; it being the thing which they themselves pretend doth keep them from the communion. But herein they dissemble with us, and cheat their own souls, having no such thoughts of themselves; but are only loath to be at the pains of thinking seriously what is to be done there, and of raising suitable affections and purposes in their heart, that they may be acceptable to God our Saviour.

This idle, lazy temper frames such excuses, and makes them pretend unfitness; which they are by no means willing to own, if another charge them with it, but rather think they are affronted by it. Just like those that pretend to be sick, and therefore lie in bed, when they have no mind to make or receive those visits to which they are obliged; but would be troubled if another should tell them they look very ill, and had best go to bed, and send for a physician; for they fear their case is dangerous.

iii. These things seem to me sufficient to take away this exception of unfitness; but for the further conviction of all such persons as allege this for the reason of their not receiving the holy communion, let it be considered, that there are other duties of Christianity, which are of indispensable obligation, if we hope to be saved; and those far more difficult to be performed than the duties now mentioned, or this to which I exhort you: for which if you be not fit, as is pretended, how will you be able to undertake the other, where you will find much greater hardship and severity?

That is, how will you be able to deny yourselves, and take

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up the cross, if it fall in your way; and follow Christ in that bloody path wherein he is gone before us?

An injury will be intolerable, an indignity insufferable, to pass by affronts and abuses (which are the smallest parts of the cross of Christ) will be beyond your power, if you cannot do so easy a thing as this, which Christ hath commanded in remembrance of his sufferings; whereby you are to prepare and arm yourselves with resolution to achieve the other.

This is a thing to be seriously pondered; because it is so necessary to be able to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and perform those difficult tasks when we are tried by them, that otherwise it is in vain to pretend to the Christian religion. For our Lord Christ himself hath said, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me*[e], *&c.* Which is often repeated in the Gospel, with peremptory asseverations; that unless he do this, a man cannot be his disciple; and that *he who takes not up his cross and follows after me* (as our Saviour's words are) *is not worthy of me*[f].

These sayings of our Saviour show that this work of self-denial and taking up the cross and bearing it, is not more harsh and troublesome to flesh and blood, than it is necessary to make a man acceptable unto Christ; who will reject those as unworthy of him that are not thus disposed. Now how they will be able to go through with this tedious and irksome work, who stick at the sweet and pleasant labour of making themselves fit to receive the tokens and pledges of Christ's everlasting love, whereby they should be encouraged and animated unto the other, I leave them to judge. For my part, I can see no hope of it; but look upon their condition as desperate, unless they dispose themselves even for the suffering of the cross, by fitting themselves for the devout commemoration of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross.

Which is so easy a duty compared with the other, that I may shame all those who refuse to perform it, when it is required of them, in such opprobrious words as Naaman's servant made bold to reprove him withal: *If the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much*

[e] Matt. xvi. 24. [f] Matt. x. 38.

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rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean[s]*?* So say I, if our Lord should now require you to conflict with the greatest hardships, would you not obey rather than perish? How much rather then, when he saith unto you, *Do this in remembrance of me?* Which is so easy to be done, that there is no trouble in it; but all pleasure, all comfort, and joy, to think what Christ hath done for us, and intends to do. All the trouble and the pains is, only to fit and dispose ourselves to partake of this high pleasure and satisfaction, of being assured that we are beloved by him, and that he will love us for ever, if we continue in his love by keeping his commandments.

iv. Which small pains if men will not undertake, but having passed this judgment on themselves, that they are unmeet to receive the holy communion, continue so to be; I do not understand why they should not withal judge themselves not to be Christians.

For all Christians are members of Christ, a part of his body: but how can any man be a member of the body, and not be in communion with the head? and how is it possible to be in communion with the head, and yet unfit to communicate with him? These things cannot stand together; but overthrow one the other.

For they that are members of Christ are united to him; and they that are united to him are in communion with him, and derive continual influences from him: and they that are in such conjunction and communion with him must be fit to communicate with him at his table. Else they are not his friends: and if not friends, then strangers or enemies. For what medium is there between these? Or how can men pretend to be friends to Christ by being in covenant with him, and refuse to commemorate his death, which seals that covenant, because they are unfit, always unfit to make that commemoration?

These things are utterly inconsistent. Either we must confess we are not in covenant with him, or we must not affirm that we are altogether unfit to commemorate that death which confirms and seals that covenant.

v. It will be much to the same purpose if I add, that he who

[s] 2 Kings v. 13.

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is not in some measure fit for this holy sacrament, cannot be in any measure fit for the kingdom of heaven, and eternal life with our blessed Saviour. But it may be fit to press this a little, because the same thing, in effect, represented after divers manners, becomes the more apt to meet with and affect all sorts of people.

Consider then, in what disposition do you think you stand for society with Christ in eternal life and bliss in the heavens, if you are not disposed to have communion with him in this holy sacrament here upon earth? What likelihood can you fancy of having his company there, if he cannot have your company here?

That which keeps you from the one will exclude you from the other. I mean those things, whatsoever they be, that make you unmeet to partake of his table at present, will make you unmeet to feast with him in his heavenly kingdom hereafter. The terms of admission unto both are the same, (for he that duly partakes of the holy communion hath an earnest given him of everlasting bliss,) and therefore there cannot be different terms of exclusion, but the very same also.

That is, those sins which exclude men from the kingdom of heaven are they which exclude them from the pledge and earnest of it in this holy sacrament. And those sins which do not shut the gate of the heavenly kingdom against them, cannot be a bar to their receiving the sacrament: satisfy yourselves what those sins are of both sorts, and you will withal satisfy yourselves that you are not unfit to come to the holy communion, unless you be unfit to enter into heaven: and if you be unfit for that, I do not see how you can rest satisfied, if you have any care of your souls, till by becoming capable to be received thither, you become capable to be entertained at the Lord's table.

For which every sudden passion, every rash word, every sin that is committed by surprise against the settled purpose of our souls and serious endeavours, will not make us utterly unfit, because such things will not shut us out of heaven. But those gross, those deliberate and habitual sins, that bar the door of heaven against us, are the same that put a bar against our coming to the Lord's table: and the same that keep us from

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partaking of that, are they that will keep us from being partakers of the other.

And therefore resolve what it is fit for you to do; the matter being come to this short issue, that if you are not fit for the Lord's table, neither are you fit for heaven: if you hope you are so fit for heaven that you shall not be thrust out of it, then are you not unfit for the Lord's table. Why then do you not come thither, when you cannot stay away without acknowledging that you have no interest in Christ and his eternal love?

So the ancient doctrine was, as we learn from St. Austin, who (in his first book concerning the Deserts and Remission of Sins, cap. 24[h].) tells us, that in his country they called baptism SALVATION, and the sacrament of Christ's body by no other name than LIFE, from an ancient and apostolical tradition, as he thinks; whereby the churches of Christ hold for certain, that nobody can attain either salvation or life in the kingdom of God without baptism, and the participation of the table of the Lord.

Which, none can gainsay, is thus far true, that we know of no other gates but these; Christ hath appointed no other to let us into his kingdom: and that they who are unworthy to partake of the holy mysteries of his kingdom, cannot be worthy to enter into the kingdom of heaven itself.

vi. If obstinacy (as he speaks a little before in that book) did not knit its stubborn sinews against the force of evident truth, I might here make an end. But some still persist in their exceptions and say, If we be not unfit, yet we fear we are: and how shall we free ourselves from these fears and jealousies, which extremely disturb our minds, and put us into such disorder, that we cannot compose ourselves for the holy communion?

In the last place therefore, I answer to this by asking a few plain and easy questions: upon which if you will examine yourselves, you will soon arrive at satisfaction.

Do you not make profession of Christianity?

Do you not believe what that religion teaches?

[h] [De peccatorum meritis et remissione, tom. x. col. 19 E.]

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Do you not endeavour impartially to practise according to that belief?

Do you not *discern* or distinguish *the Lord's body?* that is, make a difference between this holy food, and other meat and drink?

Do you not understand the ends for which it was appointed?

What can hinder you then from partaking of the Lord's body, if therein you intend those ends?

Here is a sure and infallible test, unto which, if you bring yourselves, you may try thereby, whether you be fit or no to have communion with Christ in this holy sacrament; and determine the case with such certainty, as to be no longer perplexed with doubts and fears about it.

1. The first of these questions need not be long considered; for by receiving baptism, and being present at the prayers, where the creeds are openly owned, you make a profession of Christianity; and therefore you are thus far fit, and have a right and title to come and make this profession still more solemnly at the table of the Lord.

2. The second also is soon resolved, whether you believe with your heart what you profess with your mouth? For these doubts and fears which you have lest you should receive the communion unworthily, and thereby incur the divine displeasure, suppose faith in Christ, as the Lord and Judge of the world: and that you look upon this as one part of a Christian's duty, which ought to be performed with care and great circumspection.

3. The third also need not cost you much labour; for by reading over the rules of life delivered in the Gospel, and comparing your manner of life with them, you may be satisfied whether you impartially endeavour to practise according to your belief? That is, do you not willingly rest under any habit of sin, which excludes from this sacrament, as they do from heaven, but make it your serious business to break them all? Then you ought to use this means among others, which God hath appointed, and call upon him for his aid (without which nothing can be effected) in this sort of supplication: for weaknesses bewailed, and endeavoured daily to be reformed, do not exclude us from either of them. But they rather require our

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diligence and constancy in the receiving this holy sacrament, that we may grow *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*[i]. Which we therefore want, because we neglect this means of obtaining it, or are possessed with such vain fears as quite damp that faith which should be exercised in the use of it.

4. For which fears there is no cause when you are thus qualified, provided also you *discern the Lord's body* in the holy communion; that is, consider what that bread and wine imports which you see upon the table of the Lord; what they signify and represent unto you; and what spiritual grace is imparted to you by their means: which, your very Catechism teaches you, is "the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper."

5. Of this therefore you cannot be ignorant: and if you believe it, and expect it, understanding also what your eating and drinking of that bread and wine means, and for what end you come to the holy table, what can there remain to be done to make you know certainly whether you may partake thereof safely, nay profitably or no, but only the last thing I mentioned?

6. Whether you intend to do there what the Lord commands; and to receive those benefits which he there imparts? Not eating and drinking, that is, as at a common table, to satisfy your hunger and quench your thirst; not receiving with the same common spirit, and the same unattentiveness wherewith you receive other food; but composing yourself seriously, as at the Lord's table, in a holy place, where he is present, thankfully to commemorate his death; to partake of that sacrifice which he offered for us on the cross; to give up yourselves, souls and bodies unto him, and to thank him that you have the honour to be his servants, and that he hath purchased you at so dear a rate, as with the price of his own most precious blood; to implore the continuance of his gracious and ready help upon all occasions, &c. If, I say, with this spirit, and for these and suchlike ends you approach to this holy communion, you need not have the least fear of being rejected as unworthy guests, but ought to be confident that you shall be welcome to that holy feast, as those that are faithful unto

[i] [Ephes. vi. 10.]

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Christ. For wanting none of these conditions, which are all that can be thought requisite, you want nothing to make you fit and prepared to have communion with Christ, in the merits of his death, which is there commemorated.

Yes, will some perhaps further object, there may be something still wanting: for how came the Corinthians to be so severely punished, as we read they were, for their unworthy receiving the communion, if these things be sufficient to make men meet partakers of it? Do you not think that they had all the forementioned qualifications? and yet they did eat and drink their own damnation?

I answer, No; it is most manifest, from the very words which mention their damnation, that they were not thus prepared.

1. For first, they proceeding to partake of these holy mysteries at the end of their feasts of charity (which was a common meal, where they eat and drank all together for the maintaining brotherly kindness among them), they so perfectly confounded and blended these two (the holy feast on Christ's sacrifice and the common feast on ordinary food) one with the other, that they made not the least distinction, but did eat this holy bread and drink this holy wine as they did common meat and liquors, *not discerning the Lord's body*, as you read ver. 29. of this chapter. This was one horrid sin which they committed, not to consider what they were doing; for they went to the Lord's table as if it had been still their own table, and did not distinguish between this sacred and their ordinary food.

2. One cause of which undiscerning spirit (which would not let them see the difference) was their riot and drunkenness at that feast of charity, which ought to have been only a sober refreshment. They revelled upon that good cheer which should only have filled their hearts with love to God, the Giver of all good things, and to their Christian brethren, and thereby have prepared them to be partakers of a diviner food, which followed the other. This was another fearful sin, of which you read ver. 21, where the apostle saith that as some were *hungry* at that feast of love and friendship, so others were *drunken*.

3. Which leads me to take notice of a third crime, that the rich despised the poor; and that in so vile a manner as not to

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suffer them to feast with them, but to separate from them, and to eat and drink by themselves; and also to eat and drink up all the provision, leaving the poor little or nothing. *For in eating* (viz. at the feast of charity) *every one taketh before his own supper;* and so it came to pass that *one was hungry, and another drunken.*

4. Which suggests this further crime consequent upon the former, that they turned a common feast into a private; the rich looking upon what they had brought to it as their own: whereas, in truth, they had no longer any propriety therein, now that they were come together into one and the same place[i]; where there ought to have been no difference made between one man and another, nor any part of the provision looked upon as continuing any man's own proper food after it was brought thither for the entertainment of all.

5. And that was another aggravation of their guilt, that they committed all these crimes in that holy place where they assembled for the most holy action of their religion; to commemorate the death of Christ: *What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, &c.*[k]? Which question supposeth that they might in their own private houses have eaten their own supper alone by themselves, or with whom it pleased them to invite; but in the house of God, and in his divine presence, it was intolerable, because there they met upon no private but a public account, to thank God for his love in Christ, and to testify their mutual love to each other.

6. Which they were so far from doing, that they did the quite contrary. For true love delights to keep others in countenance; but they put such to the blush as were in a poor and mean condition, and could bring nothing to the common table but themselves: who were by the laws of the feast, and by the rules of charity, to have feasted at the charge of the rich, and with as much freedom and confidence as if they had brought the provision themselves; but were looked upon with such scorn, that it made them sneak, like wretched beggars, that were to be content with the scraps which the rich would leave them. That is the meaning of the last words of that exprobration, *and shame them that have not*[l]; that is, are not able to bring any thing to eat and drink at the feast of charity.

[i] Ver. 20. [k] Ver. 22. [l] Ibid.

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These were the grievous scandals committed in that church; some of them in the very act of holy communion, and all of them in their preparation to it, and in the holy place, where they were assembled to worship Christ, with mutual affection one to another: which therefore brought down heavy judgments upon them, as you read ver. 29; *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation* (or *judgment*, as the margin of the Bible hath it) *to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* Which that it is spoken of the church of Corinth, the next words show; which inform us also what this *judgment* (that is, *grievous punishment*) was: *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

Now what is all this to you, who are not guilty of any such crimes? For no such scandals as these are committed among us nowadays any where; and therefore why should you fear so much as the judgment or sentence to suffer the grievous punishments now mentioned, seeing you are not guilty of their faults? which I have purposely represented as they are set down by the apostle; that finding yourselves free from them, you may not fright yourselves away from the communion by a dread of that damnation which fell upon them; but will not fall upon you, who cannot be accused of their crimes, nor of any other like to them, if you *discern the Lord's body*, and in a solemn manner come to commemorate his death and passion, renouncing all your evil ways, and being in perfect charity with all men.

Upon such God will pour down his blessings, and not plague them with diseases, sickness, and untimely death; much less with eternal damnation, to suffer the punishment of everlasting fire: which as it is not meant in the apostle's words (as I have shewn elsewhere), so will not be the portion of those who come thus prepared to the table of the Lord; but rather of those who stay away out of a pretence of unworthiness, when the true reason is, because they will not be at the pains to prepare themselves to partake of it. Or if it be timorousness of spirit and a scrupulous fearfulness that keeps them from it, let them seriously weigh what hath been proved in this discourse, that they have the same reason to be fearful they shall not enter into eternal life; for they that are not fit to have communion with him in these types and figures of him, how can they be

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presumed to be fit to have the immediate sight and enjoyment of his Divine Majesty?

And what serious Christian is there that can live with any comfort, who hath no hope of that? how can he be quiet or take any rest, till he hath rid himself of every thing which he thinks makes him unmeet to have fellowship with Christ in the sacrament of his body and blood? that so partaking of it religiously, he may have no cause not to look upon himself "as an heir through hope of God's everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of his dear Son."

Who invites all those to come and feast with him that abide in no habitual sin (such as shuts out of the heavenly kingdom); and they ought to come without any fear of provoking his Majesty, without any apprehension of danger to themselves thereby; nay, "draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to their comfort" and high satisfaction, and to the joy of the church of Christ, which is highly honoured by having abundance of worthy persons in it fit to communicate with their Lord at his table.

Such worthy communicants let us all, for our parts, study to be, by resolving now, and endeavouring ever hereafter, to quit all known sins, and to live suitably to our Christian profession and belief.

Then let nothing hinder you from taking frequent occasions of presenting yourselves to the Lord at his table.

Let no scruples, fears, and doubts that stick in your mind hinder you; but rather get them pulled out by some skilful hand. Do not believe you are religious, because you are scrupulous; but rather suspect yourselves not to be so, because you neglect the great duty of religion. And of this be scrupulous above all other things, lest you offend God by not coming to the communion; or rather, do not dare to be so bold and fearless in a matter of such great danger.

Let not the fault of others who communicate be a stop to your performance of that duty. That is, if they sin one way, let not that tempt you to a sin of another kind. If they go wrong on the right hand, be not you moved thereby to turn too much to the left.

Let not the danger of unworthy receiving deter you from receiving, but only from receiving unworthily. Of which there

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is the less danger if you be really afraid of it; for that will move you to be careful to prevent it. And remember that nothing will make you more unworthy than neglect of it.

And therefore let not the thoughts of your imperfections hinder you, for they will always hinder; and staying from the holy communion is not the way to be more perfect, but coming to it.

Nay, let not the breach of your resolutions, by relapsing into sin after you have communicated, keep you from communicating again; but rather come the sooner, and take the first opportunity that is presented you to renew your covenant with God, to strengthen your Christian resolutions, to fortify yourselves against temptations, and to obtain assurance of a pardon for the unfaithfulness to your Saviour. To fall is not so dangerous as not to rise again presently after we are fallen.

Much less let business hinder; for if you be honestly employed in honest business, it is part of your preparation for the holy communion.

And let no man say he wants time to fit himself to receive it, for this is, in effect, to say he wants time to live well: of which, if you take a constant care, that's the main preparation. And for the composing your mind, and considering the ends for which you go to the Lord's table; take as much time as your condition of life and the circumstances of your condition will allow; and that is sufficient.

Be not hindered from the heavenly comforts, of which you may there partake, by an opinion of the necessity of a long examination of yourselves beforehand; for that necessity arises only from long neglect of the communion.

Receive frequently, as the first Christians did, and then you will be as ready for this, on all occasions, as you are for other duties of holy worship. For you will be well acquainted with the state of your own souls, and with the nature and end of this part of your religion: especially if you take some account of yourselves every day, which will make your account short and easy before the communion.

And let not dulness and indisposition be thought a reason why you should forbear to receive it, but rather come thither to be quickened. And if you continue dull there, yet believe

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you have pleased God by doing as he commanded, though not so lively as you desired.

Let us not hear any man say, I have not profited thereby, and therefore had as good stay away. For it is very profitable to do our duty constantly, to express our gratitude to God, to receive the tokens of his love, to tie ourselves faster to him in renewed resolutions of holy obedience, to be put in fear of offending him, and in hope of his favour: and there is no man that with any kind of care partakes of the holy communion but receives more or less such benefit as this by it.

Let no fancy therefore of this nature hinder you, but oppose to them all the necessity of doing your duty as well as you are able. Some, for instance, complain of hardness of heart, and therefore dare not come; but let such understand that it is yielding and compliance to do what Christ hath commanded; and not to do it is that very hardness which they bemoan.

And if any quarrel or contention happen among neighbours, let not that hinder neither; but rather let them come to the communion and there be reconciled. It is too much that we have fallen out one with another; let us not fall out with our God too.

If these contentions have risen up to heats and anger, nay, wrath and evil-speaking, do not continue them by refraining holy communion, but, repenting of the evil, extinguish all by renewing your fellowship with God and one with another. It hath stayed too long, if one sun hath gone down upon your wrath: be afraid to let it rest a whole week till another communion day be come and gone.

And suppose this wrath improves into hatreds and enmities, which you think you discern in some hearts against you, let not that hinder you (though it do them); but come rather and testify you bear no hatred towards them, but are in charity with all men. To love an enemy is the highest proof of our love to God our Saviour.

And if you be at any time engaged in a suit of law, let not that hinder your performance of this duty: for suits at law to recover or defend that which you judge your right are not sinful; nor is it difficult to manage them without sin with a friendly and Christian mind; both parties referring themselves

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to an indifferent judge, and resolving to acquiesce as common reason directs, in his sentence; for there would be no end of contention if every man should be a judge for himself.

And do not say it is too great presumption, want of humility and modesty to be seen oft at the Lord's table: for it can be no presumption to love him very much, and to accept of the honour he doth us in inviting, nay, commanding us there to attend him: it will rather be rudeness and careless neglect of him if we do not frequent it.

And as for other hindrances, if we have some relation or friend that is sick, or we ourselves are something out of order; or we have been in a journey; or had a visit to make which could not well be avoided; or had a friend came to see us the day before the communion (with whom we could not but in civility spend a good deal of time): these and such like I am ashamed to do more than mention, they are so trivial; and by no understanding Christian can be thought a reasonable cause for putting by the intention we have at any time of receiving this holy sacrament.

I shall only add therefore that the want of something to offer at the communion (which the poor and needy may make an exception against coming to it frequently) is no reason to keep anybody away from it. For God, who accepted of the widow that cast a mite into the treasury, would have accepted her if she had not had a mite to give; she having a willing mind to give him even all she had.

Some must receive relief out of the oblations, and it is not required that such should make any, but only the oblation of themselves. Or if out of the abundance of their love and devotion they do as the poor widow did, offer all they have, they may and ought to receive back again out of the offerings much more than they gave.

Let not these therefore, nor any other exceptions, keep us any longer from this holy duty. The ends of which, if we often call to mind, or rather constantly keep in mind, with a resolution frequently to come to the table of the Lord, and there to show the affection we have to him, and the earnest desire of our souls to partake more and more of his grace, that we may be enabled to live better and better, and get a more absolute conquest over all those evil lusts and affections which

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struggle for the mastery in us, (and, by persuading us to neglect the holy communion, get a great advantage over us,) we shall be well enough disposed to partake of it with great fruit and profit, and no less comfort and joy in God; and that at any time, when an opportunity presents itself, though we have no notice, till it comes, of the opportunity. Suppose it be when we go to see a sick friend or neighbour who is desirous to receive the communion; or when we come, upon occasion, into a church, where we are strangers, and did not know it would be there at that time administered; I make no question it will be far more acceptable to our Lord Christ, if, with no other preparation than I have now mentioned, we take the boldness to approach to his table, than if, out of a mistaken humility and caution, we turn our backs of it, and go away, because we had not so much time as we desired to dispose ourselves for it.

For the Lord's sake, let us root out those false notions, whereby we are prejudiced against our certain duty; and be at the pains to settle true Christian principles in our minds, with a steadfast purpose to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: and then we shall find no cause at any time to refuse holy communion with him, but rather be stirred up to embrace the occasion with ardent love and devotion. Which the more it burns in our hearts, the fewer scruples we shall have in our minds. And those few, if there be any, that remain, will soon be overcome, when we feel what mischief they do us by keeping us from the most advantageous means of being eternally happy: nay, from that present happiness which the sweet tastes of his love, and of the benefits he hath purchased by his death and passion, impart unto those souls which devoutly partake of the holy mysteries of salvation. Which were ordained by our Lord, saith Theodoret (upon Heb. viii. 4[z]) for this very end, "that beholding the type of them, we may call to mind the sufferings themselves he endured for us; and may thereby have our love inflamed towards our benefactor, and expect the enjoyment of the good things which are to come hereafter."

[z] [Tom. iii. p. 594.]

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CONCLUSION.

Thus, I hope, I have cleared the way to the table of the Lord, so that there is no obstacle left in it to hinder your cheerful approach unto it; if you have any will to partake of it. And the consideration of what I have represented in my First Discourse hath, I trust, formed such a will in you, as the Second cannot but dispose all those who seriously weigh it, to have a will to do it frequently.

Unto which I shall press you by these two arguments, and so conclude.

I. The first is the great concern we have made show of about our religion, and the fears we have pretended lest we should be so unhappy as to lose it. If we be in good earnest concerned for it, why then, I beseech you, do we not take care to keep it, by being truly religious? Is there any reason to think that they are troubled with fears of losing one half of the communion, who can be content with none at all? Or with what conscience do they find fault with the church of Rome for taking away the cup from the people, when they themselves live as if the whole Sacrament were unnecessary?

It is a false zeal, which declaims against the priest's receiving alone; and doth not bring men to receive with them, when they may, but suffers him still to remain at the altar with a very small company.

In these things we accuse and reproach ourselves; demonstrating we are not led by religion, but by humour, worldly interest or faction. For no man can be thought to be truly solicitous for the preservation of religion, when he makes no use of it, nor receives any benefit by it. Cannot he live without the name, who lives without the thing?

If we be unfeignedly desirous to maintain the estate of religion here established, let us seriously comply with its institutions, and serve God duly in all its offices; being afraid of this

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above all other things, lest God should therefore remove our candlestick out of its place, because we will not walk in the light thereof; therefore deprive us of the opportunities of the holy communion, because we have no list to communicate.

Unto which duty let us stir up ourselves, that it may stir us up to all other. For what other way do we know like this; nay, what other way but this, for our preservation.

II. That is the second thing. We of the church of England profess to depend wholly upon heaven, in the use of spiritual weapons alone, for our protection in times of danger: disclaming the lawfulness of taking up arms to resist the supreme power, upon the account of religion. Are we not strangely forgetful then, if we accustom not ourselves to the use of these spiritual means? for our safety and security especially this, of which I may say, as David of the sword of Goliah, *There is none like it*[a]*?*

What account can we give of such foul neglect of him, unto whom we say every day, "There is none that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God?" Is not this to expose ourselves to be a prey unto our enemies, if ever they have as much power as will to devour us? For we openly declare, by not seeking aid continually from above in that way wherein we are more likely to obtain it, that we depend upon nothing at all, but are the most defenceless of all mankind.

So they would have thought, in ancient days, when they looked upon those "as left unarmed and naked, who were not fortified with the protection of the body and blood of Christ." Which are the words of St. Cyprian, who argues thus (in his 57th Epistle[b]),—"Since the eucharist is made on purpose that it may be a defence and safeguard unto those who receive it, let us arm those whom we would have to be safe against the adversary (speaking of the fight of affliction they were to encounter) with the munition of the Lord's plenteous fulness. For how can we teach or provoke them to shed their blood for the confession of his name, if entering the combat we deny them the blood of Christ? Or how shall we make them fit for the cup of martyrdom, if we admit them not first to drink in the church the cup of the Lord?"

[a] [1 Sam. xxi. 9.] [b] [p. 117.]

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Consider, I beseech you, how we in this church profess to "lean only upon the hope of his heavenly grace[c]:" which is so necessary for us, that we acknowledge in another Collect[d], that "the church cannot continue in safety without his succour;" and therefore pray him to "preserve it by his help and goodness." Shall we not then seek this succour most solicitously? shall we not implore this heavenly grace with ardent cries; especially in this powerful way of prevailing with him, by representing to him what Christ hath done and suffered for his church, which he purchased with his own most precious blood? We abandon all care of ourselves, when we thus forsake the only help we have to rest upon. Nay, it is to contradict our prayers; when we say we have no other hope, and yet do not flee to him, *our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* It is, at least, a vain and senseless leaning on him, which makes us neglect him; and lay aside the principal support which he hath left us, for our encouragement and comfort in all our distresses.

If we really depend on him alone, we had need apply ourselves unto him with warmth of affection and great diligence. If we rely on his help and goodness, let us take care to please him in all things; that so we may obtain the favour, either to have the evils turned away from us which we have deserved, or to be fortified against them with such a pious constancy, that they may be steadfastly endured.

If we do not thus study to approve ourselves his faithful servants, we foolishly confide in him against his own express declarations, that he will not patronise us in irreligion and contempt of his authority.

But if we faithfully obey him, then "we surely trusting in his defence need not fear the power of any adversaries;" but rest assured that he will "keep his church and household continually in his true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of his heavenly grace may evermore be defended by his mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

[c] [Collect for the fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.]

[d] [Collect for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.]

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A

BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

AND

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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TO MY WELL-BELOVED FRIENDS

THE

PARISHIONERS OF ST. PAUL COVENT-GARDEN.

THERE being a solemn vow upon you, made in baptism, to keep God's holy will and commandments; it is as necessary to understand them, as it is to be honest men, and not to falsify or break your word. For an help therefore to the meanest capacities in a business of such importance, I have drawn up an exposition of the TEN COMMANDMENTS in this plain and familiar way of Questions and Answers; not knowing what other course to take that would be of such general use. For the ignorant can reap little benefit by that which is purposely contrived to the pitch of the wise; but there is no man of such understanding that may not serve himself very much of that which is writ to the simple people. And to say the truth, the plainer and more common any notion is, of the greater weight and moment we shall find it, and the more every man is concerned in it. Let me entreat you then not to despise this little paper, but to read it deliberately, and ponder every sentence in it: for it being so brief (that the memory may not be burdened) there is not a word superfluous, which is not necessary to the unfolding the sense of the command. *Search the Scriptures* also, whereby everything is proved, and afterward search and examine yourselves about the breach of any of these precepts, either in whole or in part. And if the judgments of God that lie now so heavy upon us have begot any purposes of amendment, do not add this new aggravation of your guilt, to break those fresh vows whereby you have bound yourselves to God. And for the strengthening of them, *Give your selves to prayer*, as the Psalmist's phrase is, Ps. 109. 4. Considering also seriously (as an help to that) what it is you ask of God in that form of Prayer which our Lord made, of which I have also added a short explication. And remember withal, that all the prayers you make will not profit you, unless they cause you to keep God's commands better, which is the end likewise of all you believe. Read over that which we call the Apostles' Creed, and you will find that every branch

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of it doth naturally bring forth an holy life. When you confess God to be the Creator of the world, it plainly implies his supreme authority over you, and the obedience you owe him upon that account. When you acknowledge Jesus to be his Son and your Lord, it lays a necessary engagement on you to be governed by those laws, which the Father Almighty hath sent him to give us. For he died and rose again to confirm and seal them. He ascended to heaven to take upon him the government of the whole world. And he will come again to Judge both the quick and the dead according to their works. And therefore *what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness*[a], that you may be *found in peace at his appearing?* But it is not my business now to expound the Creed; whose words are better understood than its design, which is (I say) to lead us to the obedience of God's holy will in all things. That is it which I would most gladly promote. And I earnestly beseech you that this small labour may have no small effect, but be so successful as to excite in you such a working faith as will save your souls.

God Almighty take you into his protection, and revoke the orders he hath given to the destroying Angel; that you may not die, but live, to declare the works of the Lord, and to pay your vows to the most High. Amen.

[a 2 Pet. iii. 11, 14.]

London, Sept. 13, 1665.

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EXODUS XX.

GOD spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; For I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy God in vain, For the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

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VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, and ever, Amen.

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A

BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

AND

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Question.—*What doth the Preface to the Commandments teach you?*

Answer.—The right that God hath to command, and the reason that I have to obey, both as he is my Creator and Benefactor[a].

Q.—*Unto what Duties doth the first Commandment engage you?*

A.—To acknowledge the one God of Israel to be the only true God, so as to honour[b], worship[c], fear[d], love[e], and believe him[f], to trust[g], and hope[h] in him, to offer the sacrifices of Prayer and Praise to him[i], and perform all other duties[j] which a creature owes to his allseeing Creator[k], and to him only[l].

Q.—*What Duties do you think are required of you by the second Commandment?*

A.—That I give all that external worship[m] to the invisible

[a] Lev. xi. 44, 45. xix. 1, 2, 3. xx. 7, 8. Deut. x. 12, 13.
[b] Mal. i. 6.
[c] Psal. xcv. 6, 7. xcvi. 6, 7, 9.
[d] Lev. xix. 14.
[e] Matth. xxii. 37.
[f] 2 Chron. xx. 20.
[g] Psal. lxii. 7, 8.
[h] cxxx. 7.
[i] l. 14, 15. cx. 1, 2, 3.
[j] Deut. x. 12, 20, 21.
[k] Heb. iv. 13.
[l] Matth. iv. 10.
[m] Psal. xcv. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 20.

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God which he hath prescribed; but by no means make any corporeal image of him[n], nor give such religious worship to the image of anything, whatsoever it be[o].

Q.—Can you discern any reason whereby God doth enforce this command?

A.—Yes, I observe *first* that he was jealous of his own people, that the very having of an image would estrange them from him. And *secondly*, that such worshippers of other things he accounts HATERS of him, and will punish them even in their posterity, to the THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION. And *thirdly*, that he will multiply mercies To MANY AGES upon those who only serve him, as the persons who truly LOVE AND OBEY HIM.

Q.—What are the duties to which by the third Commandment you take yourself to be obliged?

A.—First, Not voluntarily upon any occasion[p], or for any purpose, to swear at all; and *secondly*, when upon weighty causes I am legally required, never to swear falsely[q], nor promise that which I mean not to perform; and *thirdly*, not to use the name of God but with great reverence[r].

Q.—Are the sins against this Commandment more dangerous than others?

A.—Yes, God's plagues shall certainly light upon such sinners[s]. For he saith expressly, HE WILL NOT HOLD THEM GUILTLESS.

Q.—What do you think the fourth Commandment teacheth you?

A.—First, To set apart from my lawful worldly employments and recreations one day in seven for the solemn worship of God[t]: that I may advance my soul[u] in piety, and learn to cease all my life from sin[v]; thereby preparing myself for the eternal praising of God and my Redeemer, in the rest which remains for his people[w]: and *secondly*, to endeavour to bring those who are under my charge to the same observation.

[n] Deut. iv. 12. 15—18, 23. Isa. xl. 18, &c.
[o] Psal. xcvii. 7.
[p] Matt. v. 34, 35, &c. Jam. v. 12.
[q] Matt. v. 33. Eccles. v. 4, 5.
[r] Lev. xix. 12.
[s] Zach. v. 3, 4. James v. 12.
[t] Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 14, 27; xvii. 2.
[u] Ps. xcii. 1, 2, 12, 13, 14.
[v] Heb. iv. 10.
[w] Heb. iv. 9.

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Q.—But why do you observe the first day of the week, when the Commandment speaks of the seventh?

A.—In memory of Christ's rising from the dead on the first day[x], that he might enter into his glorious rest, having here finished his work of redemption; for which I have the example of the holy Apostles, and the Church of God.

Q.—What do you here take notice of, that enforces your allowing God's worship such a portion of your time?

A.—I see that he hath allowed me six times as much for my worldly business; and that he himself hath, by his proceeding in the creation, signified so much to me, and thereupon allowed one day, after six days labour, to be a day of blessings unto me.

Q.—What do you think you are bound to practise by the fifth Commandment?

A.—First, To reverence[y], love[z] and obey[a] in all things (not disagreeing with God's Commands[b]) my natural parents. *Secondly,* to respect the aged[c]. *Thirdly,* to be ruled with humility by the governors of the family[d], kingdom[e], or Church where I live[f].

Q.—What blessings attend upon such obedient persons?

A.—Commonly a long and prosperous life, *Eph.* vi. 2, 3. *Rom.* xiii. 3. 1 *Pet.* ii. 14. *Psal.* xxxiv. 12, 13, 14.

Q.—What duties do you charge yourself withal from the sixth Commandment?

A.—Not to take away my own life[g], nor any other man's[h] (unless public justice[i] and necessary defence of my own life[k] make it unavoidable), nor willingly to go to war, unless when I am lawfully commanded for preservation of the peace. *Jam.* iv. 1, 2.

Q.—Are these all?

A.—No, I take myself necessarily engaged, *First,* to suppress all causeless and immoderate, long continued (though not causeless) anger[l]. *Secondly,* to put away all contumelious

[x] Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10.
[y] Heb. xii. 9. [z] 1 Tim. v. 4.
[a] Luke ii. 51. Col. iii. 20. Eph. vi. 1, 2.
[b] Luke xiv. 26. [c] Lev. xix. 32.
[d] Eph. vi. 5, &c. Tit. ii. 9, 10.
[e] Rom. xiii. 1, 5, 7. 1 Pet. ii. 17.
[f] Luke x. 16.
[g] Acts xvi. 27, 28.
[h] Gen. ix. 6.
[i] Ps. ci. 8. Rom. xiii. 4.
[k] Exod. xxii. 2. Deut. xxii. 26.
[l] Matt. v. 21, 22.

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railing, and contentious language[m]. *Thirdly*, to root out all hatred, and to love even my enemies, and to do them good[n]. *Fourthly*, to meditate no revenge of wrongs[o]. *Fifthly*, not to oppress and gripe any man, but to relieve the poor[p].

Q.—Do you take yourself to be restrained by the seventh Commandment from more than that which we call ADULTERY?

A.—Yes, I think all other acts[q] and lusts[r] of uncleanness, and whatsoever may be the cause or beginning of them[s], are thereby prohibited; and that I may not so much as gaze upon a woman's beauty to satisfy my lust, without being guilty of hidden adultery[t].

Q.—Is there any thing else that you can here observe also to be forbidden?

A.—Yes, the putting away of a man's wife (except for adultery) and marrying another, or the marrying her that is so put away.

Q.—What charge doth the eighth Commandment give you?

A.—First, Not to take away or detain[u] my neighbour's goods, either by force or fraud[x]. *Secondly*, not to withhold relief from those that need it[y].

Q.—Is there any one precept which you think will secure all the duties of this Commandment?

A.—Yes, that of our Saviour's:—As you would that men should do to you, do to them likewise, Luke vi. 31. Matt. vii. 12.

Q.—What do you apprehend to be the things forbidden in the ninth Commandment?

A.—Chiefly the giving a false testimony before a judge against any man[z]. And also lying and false accusation[a]. Whatsoever likewise may defame my brother, or detract from him before men[b]; and all rash judgment and censures of him in my own breast[c].

[m] Matt. v. 21, 22. Ephes. iv. 31.
[n] 1 John iii. 15. Luke x. 29, &c. Matt. v. 44.
[o] Matt. v. 39, 40, 41.
[p] Is. i. 15, 16, 17. Prov. xiv. 21.
[q] Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.
[r] 1 Thess. iv. 4, 5, 7. Prov. vi. 25.
[s] Rom. xiii. 13. Eph. v. 3, 4, 5. Col. iii. 8. Ezek. xvi. 49, 50.
[t] Matt. v. 38; v. 32.
[u] James v. 4. Deut. xxiv. 15. Prov. iii. 27, 28. 1 Tim. v. 18.
[x] Prov. xi. 1. Levit. xix. 13, 35. Deut. xxv. 14.
[y] 1 John iii. 17. Prov. xiv. 21. Lev. xix. 9, 10, 11. Deut. xxiv. 19.
[z] Exod. xxiii. 1. Deut. xix. 18, 19.
[a] Eph. iv. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 12. Luke iii. 14.
[b] Ps. xv. 3. Rom. i. 29, 30.
[c] Luke vi. 37. Rom. xiv. 4. 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.

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Q.—What obligations do you think the tenth Commandment lays upon you?

A.—Not to desire to myself the possessions of my neighbour, nor to envy them to him; but to be content in whatsoever state I am, without carefulness for the future, Phil. iv. 6. 11. Matt. vi. ult. Heb. xiii. 5.

Q.—Have you never observed any place of Scripture that briefly comprehends the sum of all these Commandments?

A.—Yes, Christ tells me of two Commandments upon which the Law and Prophets hang; which are mentioned (besides other places) in Matt. xxii. 37, &c. Mark xii. 30, &c. Rom. i. 3, 8, 9, 10.

Q.—What is the meaning of those words which secure all your duty to God, viz. THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND ALL THY SOUL, AND ALL THY MIND, AND ALL THY STRENGTH?

A.—That I esteem and desire him above all things, and bestow upon him my whole self.

Q.—What mean you by these words which give your neighbour security from you, viz. LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF?

A.—That I deal with every man so *justly* as I would he should deal with me, and so *mercifully* as I wish to be dealt withal by God.

Q.—Canst thou do all these things of thyself, without God's special grace?

A.—No, Without me, saith Christ, ye can do nothing.

Q.—How do you think to obtain his grace?

A.—One way is by frequent prayer of faith.

Q.—What is frequent prayer?

A.—That which bears some proportion to my minutely needs, to the greatness of the blessings which I ask, and to the favour of being invited to be much in the presence of God, by praying without ceasing, 1 Thess. v. 17.

Q.—When do you pray in faith[d]*?*

A.—When I pray with an humble confidence that God will give what I ask, and with an obedient readiness to do that myself which I desire he would do for me.

Q.—Hath Christ left any direction for your prayers?

[d] James i. 5, 6, 7. Heb. v. 7.

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A.—Yes, he hath taught me when I pray to say, OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME[v], &c.

Q.—*To whom do you direct your Prayer?*

A.—To our Father who is in heaven.

Q.—*What do you mean by that appellation?*

A.—I express by it my reverence[w] to him, and my faith in him, that his goodness[x] will, and his power[y] can, grant my request for myself and others.

Q.—*What are these requests which you have such an humble confidence that he will grant?*

A.—They are six. In the three first, I more immediately respect his glory, in the three last my own good.

Q.—*What do you desire in the first Petition, when you say,* HALLOWED BE THY NAME?

A.—That God may be known to be what he is[z], and accordingly esteemed[a], worshipped[b], and praised[c], in word[d], and deed[e], throughout the world[f].

Q.—*What is it that you pray for in the second, saying,* THY KINGDOM COME?

A.—That Christ may so rule in mine own, and all men's hearts by his holy laws and Spirit[g], that his Kingdom in this world attaining its just height[h], the eternal Kingdom of the Father may appear[i].

Q.—*What do you beg in the third, saying,* THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN?

A.—That he will give to me and to all men else his grace, whereby we may as cheerfully, unceremoniously, and impartially execute his commands[k], and submit to his disposals[l], as the Angels do[m].

Q.—*What do you entreat of God in the fourth, saying,* GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD?

A.—That he would day by day[n] while we are in this world,

[v] Luke xi. 2, &c. Matt. vi. 9, &c.
[w] Mal. i. 6. Eccles. v. 2.
[x] Matt. vii. 11. [y] Ps. cxv. 3.
[z] Rom. xi. 36. 1 Tim. i. 17.
[a] Ps. lxxxix. 6.
[b] Ps. xcvii. 7, 9.
[c] Ps. cxiii. [d] Ps. lxiii. 4, 5.
[e] 1 Cor. x. 31. Matt. v. 16. 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.
[f] Ps. lxxxvi. 9.
[g] Matt. xxiv. 14. Rom. vi. 12, 14.
[h] 1 Cor. xv. 25.
[i] Matt. xiii. 43. 1 Cor. xv. 28.
[k] Acts ix. 6.
[l] Acts xxi. 14.
[m] Ps. ciii. 20. Rev. xxii. 9.
[n] Matt. vi. 25, 34.

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grant us (in the use of honest means[o]) all things fitting and sufficient for the support of our bodily[p] and spiritual life[q].

Q.—What is it that you ask in the fifth, saying, FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE ... ? &c.

A.—That he would not so charge us with our sins as to punish us[r]; we promising the like kindness and mercy to the persons who offend us[s].

Q.—But why doth Christ teach us to beg this conditionally, rather than any of the rest?

A.—For two reasons.

Q.—What is your first?

A.—To learn us that forgiveness of sin (upon which all our Religion depends, and without which we can expect none of the other blessings) is not absolutely granted to any[t].

Q.—What is your second?

A.—To learn us that this particular of forgiving others, is one of the most befitting[v], yet difficult conditions[w].

Q.—What do you pray for in the sixth and last petition, saying, LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL?

A.—That God would give us grace to persevere, and go on to perfection, that we may not fall back to our sins again[x], by the force of any temptation[y] from the world, the flesh, or the Devil.

Q.—Why do you so conclude all your requests, saying, FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.?

A.—We do again express, *First*, our sense, that to God of right belongs eternally that dominion, obedience, and honour, which we ascribed unto him[z]; and *Secondly*, our confidence that he is willing, able, and in honour engaged to grant all these our petitions[a].

The Lord fulfil all thy Petitions, Ps. xx. 5.

FINIS.

[o] 2 Thess. iii. 10–12.
[p] 1 Tim. vi. 9.
[q] Matt. vii. 9, 11. Luke xi. 11, 13. Matt. v. 16. 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.
[r] Ps. li. 1.
[s] Matt. v. 7.
[t] Is. i. 16, 17.
[u] Acts iii. 19.
[v] Eph. iv. ult.
[w] Matt. xviii. 24, &c. 35.
[x] Job v. 14. John viii. 11.
[y] 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. Rom. xvi. 20. 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. Luke xxii. 31, 32.
[z] 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.
[a] Matt. xxi. 22. 2 Cor. i. 20. Ephes. iii. 20, 21.

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THE DEVOUT CHRISTIAN

INSTRUCTED

HOW TO PRAY AND GIVE THANKS TO GOD:

OR,

A BOOK OF DEVOTIONS

FOR FAMILIES,

AND

FOR PARTICULAR PERSONS,

IN MOST OF THE CONCERNS OF HUMAN LIFE.

MARK XI. 17.
It is written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer.

2 CHRON. VI. 24, 25.
If they return, confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication before thee in this house, then hear thou in heaven, and forgive.

1 THESS. V. 17, 18.
Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks.

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I NEED not tell the well-disposed reader, there being so much said and writ continually on this argument, how natural and necessary it is for all rational creatures to look back upon all occasions to the Author of their being, that they may make him their hearty acknowledgments for all the benefits they have received from him, and still recommend themselves, and all their concerns, to his continued grace and good providence. Nor shall I go about to show how much the public service of God in his own house is to be preferred before the private devotion of families at home; there being no reason, as far as I understand, to make the latter necessary, but only because in most places Christian people cannot meet together at the church every day, morning and evening, to give to GOD the glory that is due unto his name.

My business is to desire him to remember how natural it is likewise to all mankind to take such good advice beforehand, when they have any petitions or thanks to prefer unto earthly gods, that they may be delivered in a decent and grave form of words, as well as after a reverent manner; and to consider therefore with what sober and prudent care all those expressions ought to be weighed, wherein they present the humble desires and grateful affections of their hearts to the most high God, the eternal Majesty of heaven and earth.

It hath not proved, I am sure, an honour to religion, that men have learnt to be less solicitous about the one than they are about the other. But such have been the licentious rambles of their fancy in sudden prayer, so bold and rude have their descriptions been of Almighty God, so rash their affirmations concerning him, or concerning themselves, and so many untrue or doubtful things have they uttered, that it is sufficient, in my poor judgment, to blast the credit of that way of address to him; as it hath done, alas! with too many,

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the credit of Christian piety, which hath suffered extremely by such extravagance.

I know there are great numbers that will be ready to oppose me in this particular, with whom I list not to dispute in this short preface. Let me only beseech them to use so much moderation, as not to discourage honest-hearted people from performing their duty to GOD, by disgracing any longer, as they have been wont to do, all book prayers. Which if they have not the advantage (as I think they have) of sudden conceptions and expressions, yet are so necessary in the church, that without them many persons cannot pray at all. And I hope they will confess, upon due deliberation, that though some few may have attained an habit of uttering their desires freely and becomingly upon any occasion; yet as the use of it before others is too apt to minister to pride, vain-glory, and self-conceit, so most people are so defective both in their conceptions and utterance, as not to be able to discharge this holy duty as they ought without such assistance as is here offered them.

How well I have performed what I have undertaken I must leave to the judgment of others. I am sure I have proceeded with deliberation, and studied faithfully to avoid all affected expressions, fantastical allusions, insignificant allegories, pretended wit, and elegant conversions of sentences, and rash application of the holy Scripture to my present purpose; which have been the vices perhaps of some forms, though not so frequently, as well as of men's hasty inventions.

I have laboured also to gratify the reader with some variety; not because I think it is always best to use it, but because some weak and squeamish appetites will not be satisfied without it. And besides prayers for families, I have composed a great many other for particular persons; wherein if I have failed in the clearness and perspicuity of my expressions, it was much against my will, and being admonished of it by my friends, I will reform it or any thing else that is amiss.

But the length or the brevity of the prayers sure will not be accused, because there are of both sorts, that they who like not the one may make use of the other.

Some, I doubt not, will complain that they find not a prayer for some particular want of theirs not here named; but that is a defect which could not be remedied. For I knew not where to stop if I had extended my thoughts beyond those necessities which are most common, and the rest I hope may be reasonably well supplied out of that which I have done to serve the other.

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It is possible also that some may judge this whole work to be but a needless labour, since they have the Book of Common Prayers at hand, which they can use at home as well as in the church. With these persons I shall not contend, but only deliver my opinion freely about this matter: which is, that the reverence due to that book will be best preserved by employing it only in the public divine service, or in the private where there is a priest to officiate. However, the design of it is not to furnish the people with prayers for all those particular occasions wherein devout souls would make their requests to God. And the constant opinion of pious divines in this and in other churches, we see by their writings, hath been, that other books of prayers which they have composed are necessary for the flock of Christ besides their public Liturgy.

That which remains is only to entreat those who will make use of this book which is here tendered to them, first, to stir up their hearts to offer their praises, thanksgivings and prayers unto God, our heavenly Father, with fervent devotion of spirit. And then, not to imagine the reading them out of a book is any hindrance to devotion; but rather a considerable help, and much better than trusting the memory even with a form: for a man's mind hath nothing to do, when he hath the words before his eyes, but wholly to intend itself to the raising of its affections unto the greatest height and ardency of desire, and love, and joy, that it is able.

But take heed, I beseech you in the last place, lest the performance of these holy duties with some affection, deceive you in the neglect of all the rest. Our prayers will be fruitless, if they be not attended with our serious study and earnest labour to attain that which we beseech God to bestow upon us. And therefore with a sincere hatred of all sin, and a spirit armed with a hearty resolution against it, invoke the divine grace for your assistance.

If you be true Christian soldiers, that *manfully fight under the banner of our Lord*, call to him for aid, with your weapon in your hand. With a mind bent to consider, desire God to enlighten you. And with an heart stored with the treasures of divine truth, beseech him to quicken and enliven you. And with close and urgent applications of them to your heart, entreat him to enable you to form and shape your whole man, spirit, soul and body, according to them. For God is not hard to be entreated, since he entreats us to come to him; yea, gives a great deal of his grace without asking; but it is the faintness or inconstancy of our endeavours to comply with his grace and with our own petitions, that makes them no more prevalent.

They that had no other director but the light of their own minds

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saw this well enough, and were so sensible of this truth, that they were wont publicly to declaim (as we find in Aristides his oration to the Rhodians concerning concord[a]) against the "absurd folly of those who were perpetually importuning the gods with their prayers, but would do nothing for themselves; no, not those things which they knew the gods had put in their power."

And in the same manner Demosthenes, in one of his Philippics, chides the Greeks; comparing them to men "who, seeing great hailstones fall upon their heads, prayed that they might be preserved in safety; but would not run away to secure themselves from harm."

And therefore Clemens Alexandrinus[c] justly commends the wisdom of those who made the laws of the famous Olympic combats; by which he that entered the lists, having for a long time before exercised his body to feats of activity, was ordered, before he began to contend for the prize, to stand right over against the statue of Jupiter, and to say this prayer: "O God, if I am in all regards duly fitted and prepared, as I ought, for this combat, vouchsafe, in thy righteous judgment, to grant the victory to me." "Even so," saith he, "may a man cheerfully approach to God, who, faithfully and with a good conscience, doth all that he can both to learn his will, and to exercise himself in good works that are pleasing to him; for he shall have all that can be wished for the perfecting of his salvation: just as a physician (as he goes on) restores health to those who cooperate with his medicines, so will God give his eternal salvation to them who work together with him, both unto knowledge and unto well doing."

As for those who do not live well, it is plain, saith he in another place[d], that they do not so much as know what things are most profitable for themselves. And if so, then it is manifest likewise that they cannot tell how to pray to God to receive good things from him, being ignorant of what is good. Or if they should receive them, they would have no sense at all of the gift nor use of it according to its worth and dignity, and that for the very same reason, because they understand not its value.

Inspire therefore, O God of all grace, I most humbly beseech thee, both my heart and the hearts of all others who shall read this book with such a godly will, to endeavour zealously in all things to do what is well-pleasing in thy sight; that we may comfortably ex-

[a] Ἄτοπον τοὺς θεοὺς ἐνοχλεῖν, etc. [Orat. xliv. tom. i. p. 830.]
[b] [Phil. iii. § 43. Orat. Att. tom. iv. p. 130.]
[c] Strom. lib. vii. [cap. 7. p. 860.] [d] Strom. lib. vi. [cap. 14. p. 796.]

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pect the constant and powerful presence of thy Holy Spirit with us, to help us in the performance of our duty, till we have perfected holiness in thy fear. And the sincerity of that love to thee which we profess in our prayers, being testified by an unwearied observance of all thy commands, we may be able also to wait with an humble confidence for thy salvation, who hast graciously promised to reward our weak and short obedience in this life with inconceivable and endless joys in a better world. Amen.

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IMPRIMATUR.

Sam. Parker R^mo in Christo Patri ac Domino, D^no Gilberto Archiep. Cantuar. a sacris domest.

Ex Ædib. Lambeth,
Octob. 21, 1672.

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PRAYERS FOR FAMILIES.

ON THE LORD'S DAY.

In the morning.

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, the Lord of heaven and earth; we thy creatures are here prostrate before thee, to express our humble and grateful sense of our dependence on thee, to honour thee with our praises and thanksgivings, and with an hearty oblation of ourselves, our souls and bodies to thy service. We are unworthy, we confess, to be admitted to speak unto thy Majesty, nor can our thoughts or words add anything to thy greatness, happiness, and glory; but since thou art pleased in thy infinite goodness to do us the honour not only to admit but to invite our addresses unto thee, that our spirits may be bettered by lifting up themselves to thee from whom we come, by meditating thy praises, by exciting our love, and paying our acknowledgments to thee, we most humbly and thankfully receive this thy great grace and favour towards us: remembering withal, that it is but just and reasonable we should pay thee our vows which we made the last night, being so graciously raised up in soundness of body and mind to see the light of this day, which our Saviour hath made, that we may be glad and rejoice therein.

We laud and magnify therefore thy most holy name, thy infinite power, wisdom, and bounty, which all the world proclaims with the highest praises. We bless thee in behalf of all thy creatures, as well as of ourselves (to whom thou hast *given dominion over the works of thy hands*[a]); for *the eyes of all look unto thee: and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing*[b]. But above all, we acknowledge thy inestimable

[a] [Ps. viii. 6.] [b] Ps. cxlv. 15, 16.

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benefits bestowed upon mankind in Christ Jesus, the Son of thy love, whom thou wast pleased, in thy infinite mercy, to send among us in our own likeness, to assure us of thy goodwill towards us, and to instruct us in our duty towards thee, and to give us hope of no less than immortal life, by patient continuance in well-doing.

We remember with all thankfulness his miraculous birth, at which the angels rejoiced; his most holy life; his bitter agony and bloody death; his glorious resurrection upon this day from the grave; his ascension into the heavens, to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high; his triumph over all the powers of darkness; and his sovereign dominion over all *angels, authorities, and powers*, whom thou hast made *subject to him*[b]. O God, how great was thy love to the sinful sons of men, which moved thee to pass by such innumerable offences whereby they had provoked thy severest displeasure! how great was that love, which hath honoured our mortal nature with so high a glory, and committed the care of our immortal souls to one so mighty to save, and so full of kindness and most tender charity towards us! O the greatness of thy love, which hath chosen us to be thy sons and heirs together with Christ Jesus; and set such an High Priest over thy house and family, to make intercession for us, to dispense all divine blessings to us, and send forth angels themselves to be *ministering spirits for them who shall be heirs of salvation*[c]! Who can understand the exceeding riches of thy grace in sending the Holy Ghost to be a witness of our Saviour's resurrection and exaltation; and to make us *abound in hope*[d] that we shall be one day raised from the dead, and carried to heaven, and keep a perpetual rest, after our short labours here, with our blessed Lord and Master, in his eternal glory?

O that we could begin it this day, in devout meditations of these things, in unspeakable joy and satisfaction of heart in the assured hope and expectation of them, and in blessing and praising thee, who hast given us such good hope and everlasting consolation! Lift up our minds, we pray thee, this morning, above all these little things here below, which are apt to distract our thoughts, and turn away our eyes from that heavenly

[b] 1 Pet. iii. 22. [c] Heb. i. 14. [d] Rom. xv. 13.

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bliss; and keep them above in the serious contemplation of it, till we be in love with it, and our hearts be fully bent and resolved to seek it every day in those ways wherein Jesus hath gone before us, though it should be with the loss of all that we here possess. It is but meet and fit that we should wholly quit our own will, and devote ourselves to follow thine; especially since thou hast shown such unusual kindness towards us as, if we had been innocent, we durst not have presumed to expect from thee.

We are ashamed, O Lord, to think that ever we have disobeyed thee, to whom we stand so deeply indebted, both as we are thy creatures, and as we are redeemed by the precious blood of thy Son Jesus. It grieves us that we have transgressed any of thy righteous and good laws, by which it is our happiness as well as our duty to be governed. We abhor the thoughts of ever breaking them any more; beseeching not only thy gracious pardon, but thy acceptance of our entire resolution to agree with thy will in all things for the time to come. We here again most solemnly dedicate all the powers of our souls and bodies to thy service; desiring unfeignedly that all the thoughts and designs of our minds, all the affections and passions of our hearts, and all the actions of our life and conversation, may be pure, holy, and unreprovable in thy sight.

For which end we most humbly implore the assistance of thy good Spirit, which our Lord hath encouraged us to hope thou wilt give to those that ask and seek it with their whole heart. O let thy mercy be upon us according to thy word, according as our hope is in thee, and our hearts sincerely and steadfastly set to keep thy commandments! *Search us, O God, and know our hearts: try us, and know our thoughts: and see if there be any way of wickedness in us, and lead us in the way everlasting*[e]. Fill our minds with awful and reverent thoughts of thee, as our sovereign Lord and Judge. Settle in us an immutable love to thee, and the highest esteem of thy favour and grace, as better than life itself; that so we may study above all things to approve our very hearts and all our actions to thee, and feel the sense of thy acceptance of us giving us greater pleasure than all the world can afford us.

Make it our delight to praise thee, to call to mind thy lov-

[e] Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

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ingkindness, to offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and to meditate on thy precious promises. Help us to *take heed to ourselves, lest our hearts be at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the* inordinate *cares of this life*[f]: to *have our conversation without covetousness; and to be content with such things as we have*[g]: *to possess our bodies in sanctification and honour*[h]: *to love our neighbours as ourselves; and as we would that others should do to us, to do even so to them*[i]: *to live peaceably, as much as in us lieth, with all men*[k]: *to put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*[l]: *to take those who have spoken in the name of our Lord for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience*[m]; and when we *suffer as Christians, not to be ashamed, but to glorify thee our God on this behalf*[n].

And accept, good Lord, of all the praises and acknowledgments of all thy people met this day together according to thy will; and assist us to render thee still more hearty and affectionate praises in that holy assembly to which we are going to join ourselves. O that all people on the face of the earth were united together likewise in one body to show forth thy praise! O that *thy ways were known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations!* and that all Christian kings especially may be filled with thy Holy Spirit, and think it their crown and their glory to be the devout worshippers and faithful subjects of the Lord Jesus, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords! *O that thy priests may be clothed with righteousness, and thy saints shout aloud for joy*[o]*!* that all who are in distress and misery may rejoice also in hope that all afflictions shall turn to their good, and *afterwards yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness*[p]*!* O Lord, hear us, and make thy face to shine upon thy servants; that we may *enter into thy gates with thanksgiving, and into thy courts with praise:* that we may *be thankful unto thee, and bless thy name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations*[q]. Amen, Amen, for Jesus Christ his sake; in whose words we conclude our imperfect prayers.

Our Father, &c.

[f] Luke xxi. 34. [g] Heb. xiii. 5. [h] 1 Thess. iv. 4. [i] Rom. xiii. 9. Matth. vii. 12. [k] Rom. xii. 18. [l] 1 Pet. iii. 4. [m] James v. 10. [n] 1 Pet. iv. 16. [o] Ps. cxxxii. 9. [p] Heb. xii. 11. [q] Ps. c. 4, 5.

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At night.

O Lord most high, the Holy One, who inhabitest eternity, who only hast immortality, and art most blessed in thy own incomprehensible perfections! thou art to be feared and loved, to be worshipped and praised, by us and all reasonable creatures, who have any knowledge how great, how mighty, how wise and merciful thou art. *All thy works praise thee, O Lord;* and we more especially ought to bless thee, whom thou hast made to understand thy most adorable excellencies, which are far beyond the highest of all our thoughts. And we have yet a more particular obligation to thee for thy marvellous love in Christ Jesus, whom thou hast sent in great humility to visit us, who are but dust and ashes, to make his abode among us, to testify thy great love to us, to assure us of thy good-will notwithstanding our many offences, and to make us *exceeding great and precious promises*, to invite us to approach thee, and to encourage our obedience to thee. We thank thee that he hath sealed them with his blood; and that thou hast confirmed them by his resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; and hast also given us so many happy opportunities to acquaint ourselves with the truth and purity of the Christian religion, which comforts us, in this state of mortality and misery, with the blessed hope of eternal life.

Blessed be thy goodness for that great consolation, and that thou hast shown us the way to it by his doctrine and example, and assured us of the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to enable us to follow after him to that glory which he possesses. Blessed be thy goodness, that we have felt it so often in our minds and hearts, inspiring us with holy thoughts, exciting in us devout affections and godly resolutions, filling us with divine joys, and with comfortable expectations of the glory that shall be revealed. We thank thee that thou hast permitted us this day to attend upon thee, together with our Christian brethren, in the public duties of thy worship and service; and that there we have received any good instructions, any holy exhortation and Christian encouragements, to proceed and go forward in the course of well-doing; and have begun in any measure that eternal rest which we wait for with all the faithful, when we shall praise, and thank, and love thee our heavenly Father

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better than we can do now, whilst we are in these frail bodies and absent from the Lord.

We can do no less than offer up again our souls and bodies to thee, to be ordered and governed by thy blessed will, and not our own: that so we may be every day more prepared for that happy state, and draw nearer and nearer in the disposition and temper of our spirits to that immortal blessedness. It is our satisfaction, our security, the ease and joy of our hearts, to be under the conduct of thy unerring wisdom; to follow thy counsels, and to be determined in all things by thy holy will; who art so good, and hast given us such large demonstrations of thy abundant kindness and good will to us, as will not let us distrust thy tender care of us; whatsoever it is thou wouldest have us do or suffer in this world.

O God, purify our minds and thoughts more perfectly, that we may never conceive amiss of thee; but have right apprehensions in all things: and purify all our passions and affections likewise, that we may entirely love thee, and rejoice in being beloved of thee; and humbly confide in thee, and absolutely resign ourselves to thee, and be filled with constant devotion towards thee our Almighty Creator and most merciful Redeemer. Possess our hearts with such a lively sense of our relation to thee in both respects, and of the honour thou hast done us in preferring us so much above the rest of our fellow creatures, that we may ever behave ourselves suitably to the dignity of our nature and of our religion.

O that we may never degenerate into a base and unworthy love of any thing here below; nor be oppressed with the burden of the cares of this life; nor sink under the weight of any affliction, nor be vainly puffed up with the greatest fulness of earthly goods, if thou art pleased to bestow them on us. But assist us with thy grace to *abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good*[r]. Dispose us to a discreet and temperate use of all the pleasures of this world. Endue us with true modesty and humility of spirit, that we may *not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but think soberly, according to the measure which thou hast dealt unto us*[s]. Keep us from being *wise in our own conceits;* and enable us so to

[r] Rom. xii. 9. [s] Rom. xii. 3, 10, 16.

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order ourselves, that *our moderation may be known to all men*[t]. Make us *kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love:* to delight in doing good; *to show all meekness to all men: to render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour; and to owe no man any thing, but to love one another*[u]. Make us so happy that we may be able to *love our enemies, to bless those that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*[x]. Compose our spirits to a quiet and steady dependence on thy good Providence, that we may not *take* too much *thought for our life, nor be careful for any thing; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, still make known our requests to thee our God*[y]. And help us *to pray always, and not faint: in every thing to give thanks, and offer up the sacrifice of praise continually*[z]*: to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear*[a]*: to believe those things which we do not see, and to rejoice in hope of thy glory: to possess our souls in patience*[b]*: and to learn, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content.* Make us *know both how to be abased, and how to abound; every where and in all things instruct us, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need; being enabled to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us*[c]. That we feeling the joys of uprightness and integrity of heart, our religion may be the greatest comfort and pleasure to us, and we ourselves an ornament to our religion.

O that we could alway by an innocent, good and useful life, commend the doctrine of God our Saviour to those who converse with us: and that the light of all Christians did so shine before men, that others beholding their good works might be moved to glorify thee, and heartily to believe on the Lord Jesus. Send forth thy light and thy truth into all the dark corners of the earth, that *all kings may fall down before him, and all nations serve him*[d]. And endue them whom thou hast placed in such high authority over others, with that di-

[t] Phil. iv. 5. [u] Tit. iii. 2. Rom. xiii. 7, 8. [x] Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 15. [y] Matt. vi. 25. Phil. iv. 6. [z] Luke xviii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 18. Heb. xiii. 15. [a] 1 Pet. i. 17. [b] Rom. v. 2. Luke xxi. 19. [c] Phil. iv. 11, 12. [d] Ps. lxxii. 11—14.

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vine Spirit which was in him; that they may *deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. That they may spare the poor and needy, and save and redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and their blood may be precious in their sight.*

Bless these kingdoms wherein we live; and as thou hast long continued to us the knowledge of thy truth, so give us grace to bring forth fruit becoming the Gospel; that thou mayest not cut us down as barren trees which cumber the ground. Lord, save the king, and establish his throne in righteousness, that we may see many happy days under his government, and be *comforted now after the time that thou hast plagued us, and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity*[e]. Prosper the pious endeavours of all those that faithfully feed and instruct thy people; and increase the number of them. O that the seed which hath been sown this day, may take deep root in all our hearts, and bring forth fruit abundantly; that being not *forgetful hearers, but doers of the word, we may be all blessed in our deeds*[f]. Help us in all the week following to *set a watch before our mouth, and to keep the door of our lips*[g]. Preserve us, that our *heart incline not to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity;* but we may be always *followers of that which is good*[h]; *and as we have received how we ought to walk and please thee our God, so we may abound more and more*[i].

Protect us, we beseech thee, and all our friends every where this night; grant us quiet and undisturbed rest and sleep: and awaken in the morning these good thoughts and desires again in our hearts, *that the words of our Saviour may abide in us and we in him*[k]; till we come to endless life together with him: by whom we are encouraged thus to address ourselves unto thee, and to continue to pray, as he hath taught us in his holy Gospel, saying, Our Father, &c.

A shorter form of prayer for the Lord's day morning.

O MOST holy and eternally blessed: *The heaven, and the*

[e] Psal. xc. 15. [f] James i. 25, 26. [g] Ps. cxli. 3, 4. [h] 1 Pet. iii. 13. [i] 1 Thess. iv. 1. [k] John xv. 7.

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heaven of heavens is thine, the earth also with all that therein is[l]. Thou art every where, and canst not be excluded from any place; but art present to the greatest secrets of our souls, and seest the closest and most retired thoughts of our hearts. Thou knowest very well with what designs and affections we now bow ourselves before thee, and canst not be deceived by any words that we are able to speak in thy praise, whilst our hearts are far from thy fear and love.

Behold, O Lord, our hearts are full with desires to be possessed with a mighty reverent sense of thee, and of all the benefits thou hast bestowed on us; and to be lifted up to heaven in love to thee and joy in thee, whilst we bless and praise thee, and speak good of thy name. We here remember with all humility and thankfulness that thou art our Creator, and acknowledge thy care and Providence over thy ancient people, in blessing and sanctifying a day wherein thou thyself restedst from thy works, that they might cease from all other employments, and admire thy wonderful works, extol thy power, bless thy goodness, and be astonished at thy wisdom in making, preserving, adorning and governing this excellent frame of the world. *The heavens declare thy glory, O God, and the firmament showeth thy handywork*[m]. The sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven proclaim the greatness and splendor of thy majesty. *The whole earth is full of thy rich goodness; so is the great and wide sea, wherein are things moving innumerable, both small and great living creatures*[n]. There is nothing but what speaks of thee; and above all, the children of men whom thou hast wonderfully made, and curiously wrought, and impressed with thine own image, that they might understand thee and love thee, in all and above all things.

The variety, the order, the steadfastness of all thy works in this great world, abundantly utter thy adorable perfections. But thou, O Lord, by thy goodness in giving thy Son for us, and then raising him up from the dead, and setting him at thy right hand, hast given us new matter of wonder and praise; and consecrated a better rest and holy day of rejoicing; wherein we should behold the glories of another world, and have before our eyes the happiness thou intendest for us there, together

[l] Deut. x. 14. [m] [Ps. xix. 1.] [n] Ps. civ. 24.

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with all the excellent means which lead unto it. Thou givest us occasion not only to reflect upon all the good things thou hast provided for our bodies, (which we can never acknowledge enough; the very health and ease of one day deserving the thankfulness of many,) but we must also remember that we are thy redeemed ones, and that thou hast done great things for our souls in thy Son Jesus, who is entered into the heavens for us, and gone to prepare a restingplace for all those that follow him. This exceeding riches of thy grace infinitely surpasses all our acknowledgments, since all the praises we are able to render thee are less than is due for thy temporal blessings.

To this love we owe the knowledge of thee, the true and only God; our freedom from idolatry, and a vain conversation; the true principles of holy living; the benefit of repentance; the promise of a pardon, the assistance of thy Holy Spirit; the ministry of thy angels; the hope of immortal life; and the pledges our Lord hath left us of his endless love. To this we owe thy forbearance in the days of our ignorance; thy unwearied patience towards us in a continual rebellion; and thy earnest entreaties of us, when we were passionately bent upon our own destruction. Thou hast sent us, in much love, many holy instructors and guides to blessedness. We have had the benefit of sundry pious sermons, good examples, wholesome admonitions, and serious counsels of the power of the Holy Ghost, and divers restraints of fear, and shame, and love; and thou still pursuest us with thy merciful kindness, and beseechest us to attend to thy gracious invitations, and receive thy blessings, and make thee our choice, and be eternally happy in thy divine favour and likeness. What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits towards us?

O help us to manifest our real and unfeigned desires to make some worthy returns to thee, by our careful improvement of the holy opportunity which thou this day puttest into our hands. O that our minds may be more enlightened to understand the truth as it is in Jesus, that our wills may be more steadfastly resolved to cleave unto it; that our affections may be excited to a stronger and more ardent love to thee, and to a greater delight in thee; and all the powers of our souls disposed to serve thee at all other times, more cheerfully and

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readily, in all the duties of piety, soberness, righteousness, and mercy. So that every day may become an holy rest to the Lord, by ceasing to do evil, and constantly doing well; and we may glorify thee throughout our whole life, in all our actions *shewing forth thy praises, who hast called us out of darkness into thy marvellous light*[n]. And enlighten, good Lord, the whole world with the beams of thy glorious gospel. And dispose the hearts of all Christian people, among whom the Sun of righteousness hath shone so long, to walk as children of the light: that so they may offer up unto thee this day most acceptable sacrifices for themselves and for all mankind; and be fitted and prepared by serving thee in righteousness and true holiness here, to shine for ever in his heavenly kingdom with Christ Jesus our Saviour. By whom thou hast given us a good hope in thee, that thou wilt hear our prayers, and do for us above all that we can ask or think; which we humbly beg in those holy words which he hath taught us, saying,

Our Father, &c.

Another at night.

O most blessed for evermore; the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. *How precious are thy thoughts to usward! how great is the sum of them!* Thou renewest thy favours continually, and art still pouring upon us innumerable benefits, of which this is not the least, that thou givest us leave to come into thy presence, to call thee Father, and to make known our requests to thee by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. We accept, O Lord, with all thankfulness, this thy great grace and lovingkindness to us; and are here again prostrate before thee this evening, to acknowledge thy goodness in making us such excellent creatures; capable to know thee, and acknowledge thee, and love thee, and by being made like thee, to be externally happy with thee.

Blessed be thy name that we are now alive, and that we have lived so long in health, and strength, and peace, and plenty of all good things; whereas our eyes might have been consumed with grief, our bones sore vexed, and we might have

[n] 1 Peter ii. 9.

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mingled our drink with continual weeping. We are bound unto thee for the free use of our understandings; for the good inclinations we find in our will; for any devout affections which are stirring in our hearts; for all the advantages we have had by our education, good company, and holy examples; and more especially for the illuminations of the Holy Ghost by thy blessed gospel; the breathings of it frequently into our spirits; the importunities thou hast used to draw us to thee; and the great and precious promises whereby thy love in Christ Jesus constrains us to resign ourselves entirely to the obedience of thy precepts.

We ought likewise to admire and praise thee for thy goodness to all thy creatures, who live daily upon thy bounteous allowance. *The eyes of all wait on thee, and thou givest them their food in due season*[o]. Thou diffusest thy blessings in several streams to every one of them according to their needs. *That thou givest them, they gather: thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good*[p]. We give thee the glory of thy plentiful provision thou hast made for them; and more particularly admire thy great liberality to the children of men, under whose feet thou hast put in subjection *all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the waters*[q]. O Lord we praise thee for thy goodness to those who praise thee not themselves. Be thou adored and acknowledged in thy bounty, which bestows so many blessings unasked and unsought; and continues them notwithstanding abundance of provocations, and most high offences that they have given to thy merciful kindness.

And let thy goodness to thy church be never forgotten by us, which thou hast in all ages protected and defended; in a marvellous manner propagating the gospel of our Saviour, confounding its opposers, and spreading it by the power of the Holy Ghost over the face of the earth. We thank thee for thy singular favour to these countries wherein we live: to whom these glad tidings of salvation have reached, and who have long enjoyed a more glorious light than many other places; and being delivered from the darkness of popish su-

[o] Ps. cxlv. 15. [p] Ps. civ. 28. [q] [Ps. viii. 7, 8.]

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perstition, and from sundry attempts that have been made to bereave us of this happiness; and are again settled, after many confusions, in a peaceable enjoyment of thy true religion, which thou hast also continued to us, though we have not brought forth fruit worthy of the gospel of thy grace.

O that all thy undeserved goodness may have this effect upon us; to make us heartily love thee, and devoutly worship thee, and zealously obey thee, and steadfastly trust and hope in thee for ever. That by a careful improvement of the knowledge of thee our God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom thou hast given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, we may still enjoy this inestimable treasure, and all thy love to us may at last be finished in those eternal joys which he hath promised to the faithful. And as we have been taught, exhorted, and encouraged this day out of thy holy word, and have likewise publicly acknowledged our obligations to thee, and made profession of love, and gratitude, and dutifulness to thy divine Majesty, so help us all the week following openly to testify the truth and honesty of our hearts in all this by a blameless conversation, in all humility, meekness, temperance, righteousness, charity, and peace, *with all them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*[r].

Bless our sovereign, the defender of the faith we profess, and all employed under him in their several offices, that they may be instruments of continuing to us these holy opportunities, with all other good things that may make these kingdoms happy. O that all our friends may be thine; and if we have any enemies, Father, forgive them. Comfort and support the sick, the needy, and all other distressed persons with an immovable belief of thy wise and good providence, to which give them grace patiently and obediently to resign themselves. And when all our senses this night shall be bound up with sleep, be thou, O Lord, our keeper; and after the refreshment of that repose, and this holy rest from our labours, raise us in the morning to return unto them with cheerful minds and ready wills; praising still and magnifying thy multiplied mercies to us in Christ Jesus, by whom we present ourselves and petitions to thee, saying further, as he hath taught us,

Our Father, &c.

[r] [2 Tim. ii. 22.]

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Another for the afternoon, or any other time of that day.

O most holy, glorious, and blessed: thy name is excellent in all the earth; and thou art for ever praised by all the host of heaven, who are never weary of thy service. We thy creatures, sinful dust and ashes, have many times professed it is our happiness to join with those heavenly inhabitants in admiring, worshipping, blessing, and loving thee, the great Lord of all, with pure hearts, in unity of spirit, sincere friendship, and brotherly accord one with another. We have often spoken great things of thee, and declared thy service to be the sweetest pleasure, and one hour spent in holy meditations, devout affections, and cheerful thanksgivings, to be far better than all the time we spend in other employments.

How much then, if we mean sincerely, and according to our words, should our hearts rejoice that we may spend a day in thy courts, and are invited to a longer attendance on thy divine Majesty in the duties of thy worship and service! We are ashamed that any weariness should seize on our spirits, and that it should be irksome to us to renew our thoughts and acknowledgments of thy infinite goodness. Behold, O Lord, we are resolved again to address ourselves unto thee with praise and thanksgiving, for granting us such happy opportunities to look back to thee, the Author of our being, to lift up our souls towards our heavenly country, and unite them to the first and chiefest good, from whence we derive whatsoever we have or hope to enjoy: beseeching thee to help us to draw near unto thee, with hearts full of wonder at thy incomprehensible Majesty; full of love to thy most wise and almighty goodness; full of thankfulness for thy benefits; full of desires to be what thou wouldst have us; and full of joy that thou wouldst have us be so happy, in being made thy children, partakers of a divine nature, and heirs of immortal life.

We admire thy glory, O great Lord of heaven and earth, which shines in the whole creation; thy greater glory in the work of our redemption by the miraculous birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus; and the greatest of all which we hope and wait for at his appearing, when he *shall come to be admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe*[s]. Thou hast done great things for us already, thou hast

[s] [2 Thess. i. 10.]

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promised to do greater, and thou art daily performing thy promises, and preparing us for the accomplishment of them all in the highest blessedness.

O God of all grace, make us wiser stewards than we have been of thy manifold gifts and graces which we are intrusted withal. Help us carefully to husband this sacred opportunity which thou continuest to us, to the best advantage of our immortal souls. Gather in our thoughts from our ordinary business. Fix them on thyself, and hold them in the contemplation of thy infinite mercies, and of those divine truths which represent our duty and thy exceeding love and kindness towards us. Chase away all worldly affections, and overawe our spirits with a sense of thy divine presence; that by serving thee with a religious reverence this day, we may be disposed to walk in thy fear all the rest of our lives; having a grateful remembrance of thy benefits, a deep and serious reflection upon our own resolutions and thy gracious promises, an holy jealousy over ourselves, lest we should be unfaithful to them, and a pious care in all things to approve ourselves the constant and diligent servants of the Lord Jesus.

O that our thankfulness, and good affections, and zealous desires, may not end with our prayers, nor conclude with this day; but we may be possessed with such a strong and habitual sense of thee, and of our obligations to thee, that we may every day earnestly and heartily serve thee in all the actions of Christian piety, and be unwearied in well-doing unto the conclusion of our lives. Grant this, O heavenly Father, with all other things which thou judgest necessary for us or for thy whole church, whose services this day we humbly beseech thee may be acceptable to thee, through the merits and intercession of Christ Jesus, our most blessed Lord and Saviour. To whom with thee, and the Holy Ghost, be rendered, as is most due, all honour, thanksgiving, and praise, with the most affectionate and faithful obedience, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Another.

O most holy, great, and glorious Majesty of heaven and earth; to whom all the blessed company above do with the highest admiration and love give continual praise, and thanks,

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and honour, and worship, and obedience; acknowledging thou art above all that they are able to speak of thee, or ascribe and render thee:—much more art thou exalted above the thoughts of such poor mortals as we, who are clothed with flesh, and live far remote from the throne of thy glory. And yet, such is thy goodness, thou condescendest to admit, nay, to draw us to a fellowship with those holy spirits, that we may thereby be made happy and called thy servants, though, when we have done the best we can, very unprofitable.

What is man that thou art mindful of him? what are the sons of men that thou dost at all consider them? Thou hast crowned us with glory and honour here below, and raised us to a dominion over the works of thy hands. Thou hast endued us with understandings to know thee, and with wills to love thee; whose most excellent wisdom, almighty power, and surpassing goodness we discover in all thy works of wonder.

But what is sinful man, that thou shouldest so much regard him as to send after him to seek and save him when he was lost? Lord! what grace was this, that thou shouldest vouchsafe to speak with us, and communicate anything of thy mind to such forgetful and ungrateful wretches!

But that thou shouldest speak to us by thy Son, and declare thy mind in such words of grace and favour, and publish such kind intentions towards us, and recover us with so much cost, and purchase us to thyself with the precious blood of thy Son Jesus, and send thy Holy Spirit to purify us; that we might have thy image renewed in us, and be made fit society for thyself again, and restored to immortal life;—Lord! how much doth it exceed all belief, hadst thou not given us in tender mercy such abundant assurance of it!

We have those reasons to bless thee which the angels have not. We must admire thee, not only as the great Creator and Preserver of all things, which we heartily do, and give thee the glory of all thy marvellous works; but also as the Redeemer of mankind out of a forlorn condition, by the manifestation of thyself in our flesh, by the blood of thy Son, the constant breathings of the Holy Ghost, the light of thy gospel, and an unwearied patience, which hath waited on us, and propounded to us no less happiness than to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; who is advanced far above all principalities,

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and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that also which is to come.

We praise thee, O God, we magnify thy most holy name; we confess ourselves bound to thee above all other creatures that we have any knowledge of; for we are twice thy creatures, and thou hast a double title to all we have. O stir up all that is within us to bless thee, and love thee, and offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving to thee. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that we have another opportunity wherein to recount thy mercies to us, to be further instructed in thy mind and will declared by our Saviour; and to be under the comfortable influences of heaven, to cherish those holy thoughts, affections, and resolutions which are begun in us, and to promote our growth and increase in all wisdom, goodness, and virtue.

Possess us with such a strong sense of thy continued love towards us, that we may testify our true and hearty thankfulness for it by attentive consideration of all that we hear out of thy holy word, and by laying it up in our hearts, and esteeming it more than the greatest treasures of this world, and endeavouring every day to have our conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ. That so our praises being not merely words, but real deeds, and all the fruits of righteousness, we may be blessed in our deed, and at last hear our Lord speaking to us in those gracious words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world* [p]. And let thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers and thankful acknowledgments of thy whole church: which we beseech thee "to defend and cleanse; and because it cannot continue in safety without thee, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness." The whole body of it is governed and sanctified by thy Spirit, whose heavenly grace we implore for all estates of men in thy holy church; "that every member of the same in his vocation and ministry may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Who was content to die for us; and is raised from the dead, and now lives for evermore to make intercession for us; to whom with thee, O Father of mercies, and thy Holy Spirit, be eternal praises. Amen.

[p] [Matt. xxv. 34.]

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A prayer for the morning, when there is a communion.

O most holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, the Father of mercies, the God of peace and comfort, by whose power we and all things else were created, and by whose good providence we are all preserved and maintained:—be thou eternally blessed and praised, worshipped and served with the most ardent love, who hast made mankind so like to thyself, and ordered so many of thy creatures to serve us, and chosen rather to make us anew, and *create us again in Christ Jesus unto good works*[q], than let us be undone by our shameful disobedience to thee. For thou *hast sent thy only begotten Son into the world*, (adored be thy inconceivable love!) *that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life*[r]. And he hath laid down his life for that end, and redeemed us by his blood from the hands of our enemies, and triumphed over them all most gloriously, and in token thereof ascended into heaven, and possessed the crown of immortal life, and sat down at thy right hand, and obtained dominion over angels, and men, and all creatures.

We have felt the blessed fruits of his death and resurrection, and royal power, whereby *he is able to save to the uttermost all them that come to thee by him*[s]. Thy Holy Spirit hath breathed often into our hearts; we have been instructed in the gospel of thy grace; and thy servants, the ministers of thy word, have not ceased to call upon us, yea, to importune us to follow after our Saviour, to that heavenly bliss in which he lives. And now again thou vouchsafest to us an happy opportunity to improve ourselves in Christian wisdom, devotion, and holiness; and we have received thy kind invitations to the nearest approaches to thy divine Majesty.

O fill us, we pray thee, with a lively and strong sense of thy bounteous goodness, which hath been so many ways expressed towards us. Fill us with pious dispositions to receive more of it according to thy precious promises in Christ Jesus. Stir up in us such thankful acknowledgments to thee, such hearty resolutions to obey thee, such earnest desires and longings to partake more and more of thy divine nature, such love, delight,

[q] Ephes. ii. 10. [r] John iii. 16. [s] Heb. vii. 25.

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and joy in well-doing, that our souls may be lifted up above to that glorious place where our dear Saviour is; and we may comfortably expect, and be truly prepared for, a blessed translation thither at the great day of his appearing.

Our great unfruitfulness, we confess, in the knowledge of Christ may justly make thee deny thy gracious influences from heaven upon us. But, O God of all grace, who multipliest mercy and delightest in doing good, pardon us and make us better, by the blood of thy Son interceding for us, and the power of thy Spirit working in us. Quicken our souls to hear thy holy word with greater fear and reverence, to sing thy praises with greater cheerfulness and gladness, to pray to thee with more earnest affection and steadiness of mind, to approach to thy holy table with the deepest humility and devotion of spirit, and to receive the renewed pledges of thy love, to our very great increase in faith, and hope, and love to thee and all the world; that so this may be a good day to our souls, and we may be disposed and enabled to spend the rest of our days better, as becomes the redeemed of the Lord, who have tasted how gracious he is, and who have received the earnest of eternal life. O that our conversation may be in heaven, by the constant love and exercise of purity, righteousness, mercy, and godliness: that we, ever studying to glorify thee our heavenly Father by bearing much of this good fruit, may have the more assured hope that thou wilt glorify us with thyself.

And inspire, we beseech thee, the hearts of all others that meet together this day, to magnify thy great and glorious name with the like religious affections towards thee. *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven*[t]. *Let them offer to him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing*[u]. *Let them present themselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto him, which is our reasonable service*[x].

Teach us all, O God, the way of thy statutes; and enable

[t] Psal. cxlviii. 11, 12. [u] cvii. 22. [x] Rom. xii. 1.

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us *to keep it unto the end*[y]. Dispose our hearts to such a love of all Christian virtues, that we may *put on (as thy elect children holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave us, incline us all so to do; and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* And *let the peace of thee our God rule in our hearts, to which we are called in one body; and make us ever truly thankful*[z]. Hear us, we beseech thee, O most merciful Father; and after we have perfected holiness here in thy fear, bring us all to complete our praises and thanksgivings to thee in the great assembly of saints and angels, through Christ Jesus our blessed Lord and Saviour: *to whom be glory both now and for ever*[a]. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A prayer at night when there hath been a communion.

O eternally blessed Lord God, the Creator of the world, the Father of angels and men, the King of infinite majesty and power, who canst do what thou pleasest everywhere: *the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee*[b]; who art enthroned only in thy own greatness, and crowned with the glory of thy own uncommunicated perfections. There is nothing can be added to thee by us or any other creatures; of whose services thou hast no need, seeing thou art absolutely happy in thyself, *and givest to all life, and breath, and all things*[c]. But it is our perfection and happiness to admire and praise thee whom we cannot comprehend; to love thee as much as we know thee; and to obey thee as much as we love thee, *with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts*[d].

We praise thee therefore, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. We give thee the glory that is due unto thy name: and with hearty love offer up ourselves again entirely unto thee, whose we are, and for whom we were made. Justice

[y] Psal. cxix. 33. [z] Coloss. iii. 12, &c. [a] 2 Pet. iii. ult.
[b] 2 Chron. vi. 18. [c] Acts xvii. 25. [d] 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

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and gratitude, fear and love, hope and interest, whatsoever hath any power to move our hearts, do all press and mightily urge us constantly to devote and consecrate our souls and bodies to thy faithful service. We cannot neglect thee, unless we will cast away ourselves; nor sin against thee, unless we will be our own accusers, judges and tormentors, and throw ourselves into the greatest miseries. Thou hast been so good to us, that if we should not become good likewise, we must hate and abhor ourselves; who cannot but love and delight in those who show us any kindness, and bestow any benefits upon us, though they are but thy ministers and servants, that have nothing, and can do nothing but what thou hast given them, and inclinest them to do.

By thee we were formed and brought out of our mother's womb: and by a greater mercy were early born again, and made thy children in Christ Jesus. We have been thy care ever since; and been instructed in that covenant of grace (into which at our baptism we were received) by the knowledge thou hast given us of thy blessed gospel. Wherein we read the great love of our Saviour in dying for us; and have the promise of his Spirit to sanctify and govern us; his holy precepts for the rule of our actions, his glorious example to excite and quicken us, and the hope of eternal bliss by his resurrection from the dead, to encourage and comfort us in welldoing. And in the meantime we enjoy the society of thy saints, the ministry of thy angels, and the direction and assistance of thy faithful servants, thy ambassadors of peace and reconciliation with thee.

All which fruits of thy wonderful love we have long enjoyed; and thou hast this day entertained us at thy table, where thou hast refreshed us with the communion of the body and blood of Christ Jesus, the earnest of a blessed resurrection, and the pledge of immortality: besides innumerable good things, which thy most tender mercy hath been pleased to bestow upon our bodies, to make our passage to that blessedness, through all the troubles and dangers of this life, the more easy and delightful to us. And all this thou hast done for those who have been too idle and useless, cold and dull, inconstant, and soon weary of their duty, forgetful of benefits, and unfaithful to their own promises. But thy infinite goodness still

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continues to do it; to make us more diligent, more zealous, more steadfast and immovable, more mindful of thee, and of our own holy purposes, that we may be *abundant*, as there is reason, *in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*[d].

And that is the most sincere and fervent desire of our souls likewise, who here most humbly beseech thee, by the power of thy Holy Spirit to preserve in us a perpetual and affectionate remembrance of all thy undeserved kindness to us. Stir up all that is within us every morning to bless and praise thy holy name: that by a renewed serious acknowledgment of thy benefits, we may be more and more stirred up to love, and to all good works. O that the Lord Jesus may be always in our thoughts and in our hearts; that we may make him our pattern, as he is our hope! O that nothing may be so dear unto us in this world as his holiness, his humility, his goodness and charity, his meekness and patience, his entire trust in thee, and resignation to thee, his delight to do thy will, O God, in hope of that *eternal life, which thou who canst not lie hast promised to us*[e]. Fix our minds and affections more steadfastly on that glory wherewith he is crowned, by his obedient suffering of death, that we may never be weary nor faint in our minds under any sufferings for well-doing; but continuing faithful to the death, may also receive the crown of life. And be graciously pleased, O Lord, to fulfil the devout prayers of thy church, which have been this day offered unto thee for all mankind, especially for all Christian people, for these kingdoms, for our sovereign and all the royal family, for our spiritual pastors and governors, for all sorts and conditions of men among us. Let all those supplications for grace, mercy and peace, together with all the praises and thanksgivings which have been rendered for all thy blessings, be ever acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

And particularly we beseech thee to accept of this our bounden duty and service, pity our great weaknesses, pardon all our sins and negligences, and deny us not the grace of thy Holy Spirit, which we have implored, to enable us to amend our lives according to thy holy word; but after thou hast

[d] [1 Cor. xv. 58.] [e] Tit. i. 2.

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refreshed us with quiet sleep this night, let us feel it moving our hearts to the same holy thoughts, acknowledgments, desires and resolutions which it now works in us, through thy mercy declared to us in Christ Jesus. In whose words we conclude our prayers, saying, as he hath taught us,

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c.

MONDAY MORNING.

We humble ourselves, O Lord of heaven and earth, before thy glorious Majesty; we heartily acknowledge thy sovereign dominion over us and all creatures; we praise and magnify thy eternal power, wisdom, goodness and truth; and we render thee our most unfeigned thanks for the innumerable benefits which thou in thy bounty hast loaded us withal: above all for the gracious declaration thou hast made of thy good will to us in Christ Jesus, by whom thou hast invited and encouraged sinners to return to thee, and directed them in the way to everlasting bliss.

We blush to think of our shameful forgetfulness of thee, and ingratitude to thee; to whom we owe all that we have in this world, and all our hopes in the next. We most humbly implore thy tender mercies in the forgiveness of all our sins, whereby we have offended in thought, word or deed against thy just and holy laws. For we are truly sorry for all our misdoings: we utterly renounce whatsoever is contrary to thy will, and here devote ourselves entirely to the obedience thereof. Accept, O most merciful Father, of this renewed dedication, which we make of our whole man, body, soul and spirit to thee: and as thou dost inspire us with holy resolutions, so accompany them always with the assistance of thy grace, that we may be able every day to offer up ourselves more sincerely and more cheerfully to thee, with more pure

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affection and hearty devotion, and ready disposition to thy service.

We adore thy great grace which hath brought salvation to us, and *teaches us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*[f]. We will endeavour, O Lord, to preserve a grateful sense of thy mighty love in our minds, and to follow the doctrine and example of thy Son Christ Jesus; as becomes those who have such *a blessed hope*, and look for so great salvation at the day of his glorious appearing. We desire above all things to be so pure and undefiled, so meek and gentle, so humble and lowly, so just and merciful, so peaceable and patient, contented and thankful, as our blessed Lord and Master was. And we hope that thou wilt fulfil all the gracious promises he hath made to us, which we esteem far greater treasure than thousands of gold and silver. They are the support, the comfort, the satisfaction of our hearts. We ask nothing but that it may be to thy servants according to his word.

Thou hast mercifully kept us the last night, blessed be thy continued goodness, and raised us again to see the light of this morning. Receive us likewise all this day into thy protection, to which we most humbly commit ourselves. We trust ourselves and all belonging to us, with thee our Creator and Redeemer. We submit to thy orders, and are willing to do and suffer what thou pleasest: *waiting for the mercy of our Lord Christ Jesus unto eternal life*[g].

And we desire, thou knowest, the good of all mankind as well as our own, especially of all Christian people; that they may all walk worthy of the Gospel, and live together in unity and godly love. For which end we pray that all Christian kings, princes and governors, may be wise, pious, just and merciful; endeavouring that all their subjects may lead peaceable lives under them, in all godliness and honesty: and more particularly that our sovereign may be blessed with a religious, quiet, long and prosperous reign; and that all his ministers of state and officers of justice may conscientiously discharge the trust that is reposed in them; seeking in their several places how to right the oppressed, to comfort the afflicted, to provide for the poor and needy, and to relieve all those that are in any

[f] Tit. ii. 11, 12. [g] Jude 21.

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misery. Bless all our spiritual pastors and instructors; succeed their labours; and give us grace to follow their godly admonitions, *to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and to be at peace among ourselves*[h]. The same blessings we crave for all our friends, relations and acquaintance; that we may all live in perfect love and peace together; doing our duties to thee, to each other, and to all men so faithfully, that we may give a comfortable account of ourselves, and rejoice together at the great day of the Lord Jesus. In whose holy words we beseech thee to help us still more heartily to offer up our desires to thee.

Our Father, &c.

At night.

Almighty and most merciful Father, by whom we were made, and in whom we live, move, and have our being; to whose tender compassions we owe our safety the day past, together with all the comforts of this present life, and the hopes of that which is to come: we praise and laud thee, O Lord, the Creator and Governor of the world: we ascribe all greatness, might, majesty, wisdom, riches and bounty to thee; whom all the host of heaven continually admires and acknowledges with the most joyful reverence. We bow ourselves likewise before thee, and worship thee, in an humble sense that we are nothing in comparison with thee, and we have nothing but what we receive from thee. *Unto thee do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks, O God, our exceeding joy, who daily pourest thy benefits upon us*[i].

Blessed be thy great goodness for the long health which by thy favour we have enjoyed, for our food and our raiment, for our peace and our safety; for the society of our friends, and the love of our neighbour; for the success thou hast given to our honest labours after the things of this life, and to our pious endeavours to attain that life which is immortal. We can never bless thee enough for that wonderful grace which sent Jesus Christ to reveal that eternal life to us, and to direct us in the way that leads unto it, by his dwelling among us, and by his dying for us, and by his rising again to be the Lord of

[h] 1 Thess. v. 13. [i] Ps. lxxv. 1; xliii. 4; lxviii. 19.

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life and glory, and to send his apostles to preach this glad tidings of salvation to the world. We thank thee with all our souls, that we feel in our hearts any motion towards thee; and that we have made the least progress in those paths of life, which thy goodness hath laid before us so plainly in thy holy Gospel.

Behold, O Lord, we present ourselves here before thee to be inspired with such a vigorous and full sense of thy love, as may move us more powerfully towards thee; and put us forward with a greater earnestness, zeal and diligence in all our duty. There is nothing in heaven or earth that we can desire, but to be beloved of thee; who possessest both, and art able to make thy friends as great and happy as thou pleasest. Assist us therefore still by thy grace, to the recovery of such a lively image of thee in all righteousness, purity, mercy, faithfulness and truth, that we may know thou lovest us. O that Jesus, the hope of glory, may be formed in us in all humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, peaceableness, and absolute surrender of our souls and bodies to thy holy will and pleasure: *that we may no longer live, but Christ may live in us, and the life we lead in the flesh may be by the faith of thy Son, O God, who loved us, and gave himself for us* [k].

The remembrance of that love is most dear and precious to us. We cannot often enough make mention of so great kindness as his making himself freely an offering for our sins. It moves us again to offer up ourselves sincerely to thee, to do thy will, O God, as our blessed Lord and Master did. We repose also an entire confidence in thee, and still trust ourselves with thee, who hast *not spared thine own Son, but given him up for us all* [l]. We will humbly and reverently accept of whatsoever thou sendest us; and *in every thing give thanks, which is thy will concerning us in Christ Jesus* [m]. We hope thou wilt never leave us nor forsake us; but conduct us safe through all varieties and changes of our condition here, in an unchangeable love to thee, and in an holy composure and tranquillity of mind in thy love to us, till we come to live with thee and enjoy thee for ever.

And now that we are going to lay ourselves down to sleep,

[k] Gal. ii. 20. [l] Rom. viii. 32. [m] 1 Thess. v. 18.

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take us into thy gracious protection; and settle our spirits in such quiet and delightful thoughts of the glory where our Lord Jesus lives, that we may be willing to leave this world and go to him; *who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him*[n].

To his blessing we commend all mankind, of whatsoever rank and condition they be, high and low, rich and poor: that they may all be so happy as to do their several duties carefully, and to enjoy contentedly whatsoever is needful for them. And especially we beseech thee, "that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness[o]." We leave all we have with thee, especially our friends and those who are dear to us; desiring that when we are dead and gone, they may lift up their souls in this manner unto thee, and teach those that come after to praise, love and obey thee: and that if we awake again in the morning, our mouths may likewise praise thee again with joyful lips, and we may still offer ourselves a more acceptable sacrifice to thee through Christ Jesus. In whose words we beseech thee to hear us, according to the fullest sense and intention of them.

Our Father, &c.

TUESDAY MORNING.

All honour, glory and praise be given to thee, O Lord, our Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter, by us and by all the world. Thou art worthy of all our love, service and obedience, being most excellent in thine own nature, and of so abundant kindness to us thy creatures: who most humbly therefore prostrate ourselves before thee this morning, to make thee our thankful acknowledgments for all thy benefits, and tender thee our most hearty and affectionate service, and wait upon thy bounty for the continuance of thy grace and mercy to us. Though we are not worthy, we confess, of the least regard from thee, whom we have so much neglected, and whose love and clemency we have too often abused; yet we hope thou wilt accept of

[n] 1 Thess. v. 10. [o] [Collect for the fifth Sunday after Trinity.]

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this small oblation which we make of ourselves, our souls and bodies, with unfeigned devotion to thee. Pardon and forgive us, we most humbly beseech thee, all our past offences; the remembrance of which is grievous and bitter to us: and vouchsafe us the grace of thy holy Spirit to enable us to do thy will with greater care and diligence for the time to come. Let it ever accompany and assist us, according as thou seest us sincerely desirous and studious to please thee, in all the actions of an holy life, in chastity and temperance, justice and fidelity, mercy and charity, meekness and humility, patience and contentedness, innocency and peace; and in continual prayers, praises and thanksgivings to thee, the Father of mercies, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We see how frail and weak our bodies and all their enjoyments are; and therefore we the more earnestly desire to have our souls enriched with those immortal treasures of thy divine grace. O that we may never cease most zealously to seek and pursue them; and that we may think ourselves happy enough in the possession of them; and may rejoice in nothing so much as in *having our fruit unto holiness*, that in *the end* we may attain *eternal life* [o]. Suffer not our spirits to sink too deep into the love of any the dearest good that we have in this world; but rather by all these earthly things, which thy goodness affords to us for our support, ease and delight, raise our minds and hearts to those celestial enjoyments which will yield us eternal pleasure and satisfaction. Set our affections principally on things above. Make us so wise as to provide ourselves friends that never die; and to be still preparing ourselves by all divine qualities for their company and society; that so they may *receive us*, when we remove hence, *into* their *everlasting habitations* [p].

Thus now we commend ourselves this day to thy most gracious protection, guidance, and blessing; hoping that the same good providence which preserved us and our habitations the last night from fire and innumerable other dangers, (for which we thank thee,) will guard us this day from all evil and mischief, and bring us in safety of soul and body to praise thee in the evening. Help us thankfully to receive and soberly to use

[o] Rom. vi. 22. [p] Luke xvi. 9.

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all thy mercies, quietly to do our own business and bear our several burdens, to be just in our dealings, innocent and harmless in our conversation, well pleased with the prosperity of our neighbours, desirous of the good of all the world; especially that they may all love, and honour, and join together in magnifying and praising thee, our Lord and Governor, whose name is excellent in all the earth.

More particularly, we implore thy mercies towards these kingdoms wherein we live. Remember not against us our high provocations. Spare us, good Lord, and have patience with us; if perhaps we may bring forth better fruit, becoming thy holy gospel, and all the care thou hast taken about us. Endue our sovereign with much wisdom from above, that he may always discern what is most profitable for us, and earnestly pursue it to the utmost of his power. Bless him in his relations, in his counsellors, in his judges, and all other officers; in all the nobility, clergy, gentry, and commonalty of the realm; that every one of them may uprightly and zealously do their duty; to the maintenance of thy true religion, and the increase of piety, honesty and brotherly love among us. Comfort and relieve all those that are in any distress, trouble, or anguish either of body or mind. And give us tender and pitiful hearts towards them, ready to help and ease them according to our abilities; that we, following the example of our merciful and compassionate high-priest, Christ Jesus, may have now the benefit of his intercession for us, and at last be admitted into the high and holy place where he is. In whose blessed name and words we conclude our prayers.

Our Father, &c.

At night.

We fall down before thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, and worship thee in the deepest humility of our souls; acknowledging that we are thy creatures, who stand infinitely bound unto thee by innumerable blessings and favours which thou hast conferred upon us, out of thy mere bounty and goodness. We owe our lives to that alone, and all the comforts of them, together with all the hopes we have hereafter, either in this world or in the other. And blessed, for ever blessed be thy

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merciful kindness, for giving such glorious hopes by the Lord Jesus; by his death and resurrection, by his ascension and being enthroned at thy right hand, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost to be a witness of his majesty and glory. We rejoice, O Lord, in that great salvation which thou hast sent unto us, and cannot but be still praising thee, whose love hath so abounded towards us beyond all our thoughts and desires. Pardon, we most humbly beseech thee, out of the same grace and mercy, all our past neglects of thee, our insensibleness of thy benefits, our carelessness or inconstancy in our obedience, and particularly whatsoever we have done or omitted this day, contrary to those holy purposes and resolutions wherein we stand engaged to thee.

And vouchsafe us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit to enable us to perform those vows better, which here we renew, of greater gratitude, and more cheerful and steadfast obedience to thy divine Majesty for the time to come. Awaken our minds to frequent and serious reflections upon thy undeserved and most bountiful mercies towards us. Touch our hearts with such an ingenuous and dutiful sense of them, that our wills may be overcome to yield themselves wholly and absolutely to thee.

And that we may feel them constantly provoked to love and good works, help us ever to set our Lord and Master, by whose name we are called, before our eyes; and to admire his unspotted purity, his condescending humility, his tender-hearted charity, his meekness of wisdom, his hearty trust in thee and resignation to thee, his forgiveness of injuries, his patience under reproaches and cruel torments, his peaceable and contented spirit, his acknowledging thee in all things, and ever seeking thy honour and glory; that being in love with all these, and valuing them more than life itself, we may never cease our endeavours till this image of our dearest Lord and Master be formed in our hearts.

O Lord Jesus, favourably behold these holy desires, wherewith our souls aspire towards thee. Preserve and maintain them; encourage and increase them; make them restless and unwearied till they be accomplished in the enjoyment of this great blessedness.

Thou who hast begun a good work in us, finish and complete

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it, we most humbly and earnestly beseech thee. Give us thy grace continually for our seasonable relief and succour, that we, persevering in well-doing, may have a solid and lively hope in our death, of coming to see thee in that high and holy place where thou livest and reignest for evermore.

As for all the things of this life, we most heartily refer ourselves to thy fatherly wisdom and goodness, O Lord God Almighty; trusting thou wilt order for us that which is most convenient, and bless our honest diligence with such a competent portion of them, that we may have the more leisure to give continual praise, honour, blessing, and thanksgiving to thee whose mercies endure for ever.

Accept, we pray thee, of our thankful acknowledgments at this time, for those which this day hath added to the rest of thy benefits, which thou hast been continually heaping upon us ever since we were born. And let all the people of the earth praise the name of the Lord, which is highly exalted above all blessing and praise. O that all the kingdoms of the world would become the kingdoms of our Saviour Christ; and that all they who acknowledge his authority would religiously obey his holy laws! that all wars, oppression, and cruelty may cease among Christian people, and they may live together in brotherly love and unity! Make our sovereign and all his realms happy by a great increase of true knowledge, godliness, and virtue everywhere. Bless all our friends, forgive our enemies, requite all the kindness of our benefactors, comfort every one of thy desolate and afflicted servants, and turn their mourning and heaviness into joy and gladness at the last.

And now that we are going to repose ourselves, keep us, we beseech thee, and all belonging to us, in safety. Refresh our wearied spirits with comfortable rest and sleep, and when we awaken again in the morning, direct our thoughts immediately to thee our merciful Preserver; and help us to employ all our renewed strength to thy honour and glory, according to thy will declared by Christ Jesus, in whose blessed name and words we commend ourselves to thy infinite mercies.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us

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our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil, &c."

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

O most great and mighty Lord, the possessor of heaven and earth: all the angels worship and adore thy incomprehensible Majesty with the humblest reverence, and rejoice in rendering praise, blessing, and thanksgiving to thee the Father of spirits; for thou hast created all things, and in wisdom hast thou made them all, and spread thy tender mercies over all thy works. It is no less our happiness than our duty to join our hearts and voices with that heavenly host, most gratefully to acknowledge thy bounty to us among the rest of thy creatures, and thy particular grace and favour in our Lord Jesus Christ, our most merciful Saviour and Redeemer. We can never sufficiently admire that love which gave him to die for us, and hath made him the Lord of life and glory; that he may be the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him. All the love we have is too little to give thee, to whom all our services are due by a former title. Our highest praises fall infinitely short of thy most excellent majesty, and we are ashamed of the most affectionate thanks we can render to thee for those inestimable benefits which thou hast conferred on us, and so long continued to us.

How much greater reason then have we to be abashed at our shameful ingratitude and disobedience to thy divine Majesty! for which we are heartily sorry, and do now most earnestly repent ourselves of it; unfeignedly resolving and protesting to be more faithful to thee for the time to come. Pardon us therefore, good Lord, and receive us unto thy mercy. Accept of our renewed vows to study and to do our duties conscientiously, towards thee and towards all men. And as thou hast excited those holy desires and purposes in our hearts, so enable us to perform them constantly in the whole course of our life.

Our blessed Saviour hath told us, thou wilt as readily give thy Holy Spirit to them that ask it, as a parent will give bread

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unto his hungry children. O Father of mercies, let it be unto us according to his word. Cherish these little beginnings of goodness which thou seest in our souls; and prosper all our endeavours to attain a greater measure of it. And since at the best we are but unprofitable servants, and can do no more than was our duty to do; enable us to do every thing which thou hast commanded us, heartily, with good will, and true love to thy service.

We know this is all that can in the least commend us to thy free grace and favour; and therefore we most humbly again devote ourselves to do thy will, with a cordial affection to it. We would ever approach unto thee with delight and pleasure; and feel it the joy of our hearts to think of thee, to praise thee, to give thee thanks, and to offer ourselves with absolute resignation to thee. O that mercy may always please us as it pleaseth thee! that we may be strictly just and righteous; may cheerfully pass by injuries; freely deny all desires of sinful pleasures; willingly submit to thy fatherly corrections; and perform the duties of our several relations with singleness of heart! Render us so mindful of the great love of our Lord and Master Christ, that we may be zealously concerned for his glory, and use our utmost diligence to do him and his religion some honour in the world; delighting to commemorate his death and passion, making a joyful sacrifice of our souls and bodies to him, and desiring most earnestly that his kingdom may come, and all mankind submit themselves to his government.

Fulfil, most merciful Lord, all our petitions; and as thou hast mightily protected us and our dwellings this last night from fire and thieves, and whatsoever might disturb our repose (blessed be thy goodness), so accompany us all this day with thy blessing; that we may please thee in body and soul, and be safe under thy defence; who art nigh to all those that call upon thee, that call upon thee in truth.

And O that all those who are forgetful of their duty to thee may be awakened to a lively sense of all thy benefits, and fill the whole world with thy praises! Stir up especially the minds of all Christian people to inquire after and follow the truth *as it is in Jesus*[a]; abandoning all vice and wickedness, and exercising themselves to have consciences void of offence towards

[a] [Ephes. iv. 21.]

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thee and towards all men: and dispose the hearts of all their kings and princes to make themselves the greatest examples of Christian piety to all others. Bless these kingdoms, and endue our sovereign with such excellent wisdom and holy zeal for thine honour and glory, that we may see many good days under his government. O that true religion, justice, mercy, brotherly kindness, and all things else that are praiseworthy, may so flourish among us, that we may enjoy the blessings of peace and plenty, and there may be *no complaining in our streets*[b].

We recommend to thee all our friends and neighbours; all the poor, the sick, and other afflicted persons; desiring those mercies for them which we should ask for ourselves were we in their condition. "O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; put away from them and us, we humbly beseech thee, all hurtful things, and give us those things which be profitable for us," according to the large declarations which thou hast made of thy abundant goodness to mankind in our Lord Jesus; in whose words we conclude our humble supplications unto thee, saying,

Our Father, &c.

At night.

Almighty and everlasting God, the sovereign Lord of all creatures in heaven and earth, and our most merciful and gracious Father in thy Son Christ Jesus; we most heartily acknowledge that our beings and all the comforts of them depend on thee, the Fountain of all good: we have nothing but what we have received thence, and is owing entirely to thy free and bounteous love, O most blessed Creator; and to the unsearchable riches of thy grace, O most blessed Redeemer.

To thee therefore be given by us, and all creatures whom thou hast made to know how great and how good thou art, all honour, glory, and praise, all love, service, and obedience, as long as we have any being. "It is but meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord," and devoutly resign both soul and body to thee, to be absolutely governed and ruled according to thy holy will and pleasure. We are heartily sorry that we have not done it from the very beginning of our lives till

[b] [Ps. cxliv. 14.]

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this time. We are ashamed to think of our injustice and ingratitude in following our own desires so long, and rendering ourselves no sooner most humbly obedient in all things to thee. Our hopes are only in those infinite mercies which have spared us notwithstanding, and opened our eyes to see our errors, and touched our hearts with some sense of our duty.

And we hope in them not only for a pardon, which we earnestly implore according to thy gracious promises made in Christ Jesus, but for the power of thy Holy Spirit, to further and promote those godly resolutions which we feel already in our hearts, to live as becomes thy creatures, and as becomes the disciples of Jesus Christ, who were early dedicated to thee, and have often since vowed themselves to thy service. As thou hast made us to understand the reasonableness and goodness of all thy laws, so incline our wills to be more and more in love with them, till they be writ upon our hearts. Stir up our wills to love them exceedingly, and to cleave unto them as our very life. Let thy grace continually prevent and follow us, to keep alive such a powerful sense of thee and of the love of our Lord and Saviour in our mind, that we may naturally fear and reverence thee, and study to be approved of thee and beloved by thee, and account it our highest perfection and happiness to be like thee.

O that it may ever be the joy of our hearts to be righteous as thou art righteous; to be merciful as thou our heavenly Father art merciful; to be holy as thou who hast called us art holy, in all manner of conversation; to be endued with thy divine wisdom, and to resemble thee in faithfulness and truth! O that the memory of our blessed Saviour, and his admirable example, may be always dear unto us; that we may cheerfully follow him in his humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, peaceableness, and delight to do thy will, O God, in everything as he did! Accept, we most humbly beseech thee, of these desires of our souls after thee; and graciously assist and strengthen them according as we unfeignedly offer them up unto thee.

Accept likewise of our thanks for thy merciful preservation of us all this day; by which we are come in safety to the conclusion of it, and are here before thee with a new load of thy benefits upon us, added to other innumerable blessings which

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thou hast formerly bestowed. We are bold again likewise to commit ourselves unto thee this night; and to trust in thy merciful protection and care over us, when we can take no care of ourselves or anything else belonging to us. Defend us from all the powers of darkness, from all evil men, from fire and all such sad accidents; and raise up our spirits together with our bodies, in the morning, to such a vigorous sense of thy continued goodness as may provoke us all the day long to an unwearied diligence in well-doing.

And the same mercies that we beg for ourselves, we desire for the rest of mankind; especially for all those who are called by the name of Christ. O that every member of that body, of which he is the Head, may do their duties with all fidelity, according to the several offices to which thou hast assigned them! that kings may be tender-hearted, as the fathers of their countries; and all their subjects may be dutiful and obedient to them, as their children! that the pastors of the church may feed their flock with true wisdom and understanding; and the people all may submit unto them, and follow their godly counsels! that the rich and mighty may have compassion on the poor and miserable; and all such distressed people may bless the rich, and rejoice in the prosperity of those that are above them! Give husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, the grace to behave themselves so in their several relations, "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" and being an honour to his religion here, may receive immortal honour and glory hereafter from the hands of Christ Jesus; in whose holy name and words we continue to beseech thy grace and mercy towards us, and all thy people every where; saying,

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c."

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THURSDAY MORNING.

O LORD, the high and holy One, whose *glory is above the earth and heaven*[a]; we thy creatures prostrate ourselves in the humblest adorations of thee; ascribing to thee all power, wisdom, riches, might, majesty, and dominion; and acknowledging that to thee of right belongs all worship, blessing, thanksgiving, and praise; together with all honour, love, service, and obedience, for evermore. Blessed be thine omnipotent goodness, which hath advanced us to such a degree of being that we are capable to look back to thee from whom we come; to know thee, to love thee, to acknowledge thy great bounty towards us, and to resemble thee in wisdom and goodness. All that is within us blesseth thy holy name for breathing into us immortal spirits, that we may eternally admire thee, praise thee, love thee, and joyfully render those grateful acknowledgments which we owe unto thee. We can never sufficiently magnify thy mercies towards us, especially those in the Lord Jesus, in whom thy grace hath so exceedingly abounded, as to surpass not only our deserts but the largest of our desires.

Blessed, blessed, for ever blessed be thy fatherly goodness, who hast sent him from heaven so unexpectedly to visit us vile wretches, who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust. *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou didst thus visit him*[b]? We thank thee, according to our poor ability, from the very bottom of our hearts, for his manifestation in our flesh; for the charitable testimonies he gave of his love to mankind in the course of his life; for that astonishing grace in submitting himself to die for us; for his glorious resurrection and ascension to heaven; for the sovereign power and authority which thou hast given him at thy right hand; for his compassionate intercession for us, and the assurances we have received of his being the King of glory, and of his continued kindness to us, by the coming of the Holy Ghost. We will never cease to bless thee for that great salvation, *which was first preached by the Lord, and was confirmed by them that heard him;* and for the *witness which thou barest to them, both with signs and wonders,*

[a] Ps. cxlviii. 13. [b] [Ps. viii. 4.]

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and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to thy own will[a].

We rejoice in the light of thy holy gospel, that we see the way to be happy both by the doctrine and example of thy Son Jesus; that we have the encouragement of his precious promises, and such good hope of remission of sin, and eternal life in the day when he shall judge the world in righteousness. O how much are we bound unto thee for that comfortable hope which thou hast given us of seeing our dear Saviour in all his glory, and being there where he is, and reigning with him for ever! We again render thee our most hearty thanks for that everlasting consolation and good hope through grace which thou hast given us; and for all those benefits likewise which thou art pleased to bestow upon us, to make our stay here on earth the more convenient and delightful to us. We are every way obliged to thee beyond all that we are able to express or conceive. Thou feedest us and clothest us; thou preservest our health and our strength; thou hast delivered us from innumerable dangers; and when thou hast chastised us, it hath been in great mercy and clemency, and not according to our deserving.

O that all the world would show forth thy praise, and devote themselves to the service of our Lord. Let all kings of the earth submit themselves unto him, and glory in the name of his obedient subjects. High and low, rich and poor, let them praise the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. For *great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised*, especially *in the assembly of the saints*[b], and by thy church and household, which we beseech thee to keep and to continue in thy true religion. "As thou showest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness, so grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same."

Accept, most gracious God, of these unfeigned desires of us thy servants, who, for our parts, entirely dedicate ourselves, both souls and bodies, unto thee; resolving in all things to walk

[a] Heb. ii. 3, 4. [b] [Ps. xlviii. 1; lxxxix. 7.]

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worthy of thee, who hast called us to thy kingdom and glory, and blessed us also with many other good things which make this life to be a more easy passage to a better. We will never forget how much we are indebted to thee, but study to express our grateful remembrance of thy mercies, by living *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*[c]. Favour, we pray thee, these holy purposes with the constant assistance of thy good Spirit, that we may be able to accomplish that we have begun, and to perfect holiness in thy fear. Help us to *add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. That these things being in us and abounding, they may make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*[d].

Preserve us this day, especially that we swerve not presently from these pious resolutions, but may give such a proof of their sincerity, by our being steadfast and immovable in all welldoing, notwithstanding any temptation to the contrary, that we may have the better hope we shall persevere to the very end, through thy continued grace in Christ Jesus, in whose words we desire all that thou seest needful either for our souls or bodies, for ourselves or others, saying,

Our Father, &c.

At night.

We are here again prostrate before thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, to join ourselves with all that holy company *who rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*[e]. Blessed be thy divine goodness, which hath made the children of men but little lower than the angels, and crowned us with such glory and honour, that we are capable to accompany that heavenly host in giving continual

[c] Titus ii. 12, 13. [d] 2 Pet. i. 5–8. [e] Rev. iv. 8, 11.

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thanks and praise unto thee. Praised be thy name that we are now alive, and that we have the use of our reason and understanding; and enjoy so many of the comforts and conveniences of this present life; and have attained a good hope through Christ Jesus of being immortally happy.

O how great was thy love which sent him into the world to direct us in the way to that happiness by his holy doctrine and life; and to be a propitiation for our sins by his death, and to *be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the world*[f]. We rejoice in that Light of life; we most cheerfully devote ourselves to be the faithful disciples of him, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of life and glory. It is our happiness as well as our duty to be governed by him, and obey his commands. We are sensible that they are all equal, just, and good; and that thou hast done us an infinite kindness in teaching us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

And therefore we here again most heartily surrender our wills to thine, desiring that we may unchangeably cleave unto it with the greatest and most entire love and affection to all its commands. O that there may abide for ever in us such a strong and powerful sense of thy mighty love towards us in Christ Jesus, as may constrain us freely and willingly to please thee in the constant exercise of piety and devotion, righteousness and mercy, temperance and chastity, meekness and patience, truth and fidelity; together with such an humble, contented, and peaceable spirit as may adorn the religion of our Lord and Master. O God, that these holy desires and inclinations may never die nor languish in our hearts, but be kept alive in their vigour and force by the perpetual inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

We wait upon thee for that promise of our Saviour, to assist and promote our sincere endeavours, to preserve our souls unblamable in the love of thee, our God, and of all mankind. We heartily desire the prosperity and welfare of every one of them as well as our own. O that they were all so wise and happy as to acknowledge and submit themselves to thee by obeying thy holy laws. Especially we desire that all kings

[f] Acts xxvi. 23.

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and princes may become our Saviour's subjects; and conforming themselves to his will, may be rendered thereby most excellent examples to all other men. Endue our sovereign with abundance of the spirit of counsel and judgment, and the fear of our Lord. Make him happy in wise and faithful ministers, in loyal and peaceable subjects, and in the good success of all his enterprises for the honour of religion and his people's tranquillity. We commend to thy mercies all our friends, relations, and benefactors; desiring that all who have done us good may be requited an hundredfold here, and obtain at last eternal life. And all that have done evil to us, as we heartily forgive them, so we earnestly desire they may obtain thy gracious pardon. Together with these we remember likewise all that are in affliction, whatsoever it be, either of soul or body; to whom we wish ease and comfort, and seasonable relief, that they may rejoice in the end for the days wherein they have seen adversity.

In these holy thoughts and desires we now are bold to commend ourselves to thy protection this night, who hast preserved and blessed us (we most thankfully acknowledge) all the day past. We repose ourselves in the belief of thy good providence, with which we intrust ourselves and all belonging to us. We would lay down ourselves to sleep with hearts full of love to thee, and humble faith and hope in thee; desiring we may awake again in the same manner, and find that we are still with thee. Dispose us, good Lord, by the rest thou givest us, always to serve thee more zealously with our renewed spirits, that after the few days and nights we have to pass in this world, we may come to thy eternal rest together with Christ Jesus: in whose blessed name and words we still recommend ourselves to thy service.

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c."

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FRIDAY MORNING.

O GOD, most blessed for ever; whose the world is, and the fulness thereof; who needest not any thing that we can give thee, for thou givest us whatsoever we enjoy: we prostrate ourselves before thee to make such poor expressions as we are able of the sense we have of thine infinite bounty to us. It is but fit and meet that we should acknowledge and praise thee, though we can thereby add nothing unto thee. It is our happiness to have a grateful remembrance of thy goodness to us, and to be knit unto thee in hearty love and dutiful affection all the days of our life.

We thank thee therefore, O Lord of heaven and earth, who hast loaded us continually with thy benefits. They are great and many, more than we can number, both towards our bodies and towards our souls; for the comfort of this life, and our everlasting salvation in the life to come. For ever adored be thy love in Christ Jesus, who hath given us an undoubted testimony of thy fatherly care and providence over us, and encouraged us, though we have offended thee, to address ourselves to thee, with good hope of thy gracious acceptance of us into friendship with thee again.

We love thee, O Lord, above all things. We freely offer our spirits, souls and bodies to thee, with most sincere devotion, and the heartiest affection to thy service. There is nothing we desire and long for so much, as to have a lively sense of thy marvellous love always possessing our hearts; that may still constrain us to love thee, to obey thee, to trust in thee, to be content with the portion thy love allots unto us, and to rejoice even in the midst of all the troubles of this life.

We cannot choose, O Lord, when we seriously think of what thou hast done for us, but absolutely commit ourselves to thee, and entirely confide in thee for the time to come. Since thou hast *not spared thy own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shalt thou not with him also freely give us all things*[a]? We depend upon thee especially for the grace of thy Holy

[a] Rom. viii. 32.

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Spirit; for the power of which in our hearts exciting these holy desires and godly resolutions we most humbly thank thy divine Majesty. O that we may feel it perpetually bearing us up by the strength of our most holy faith, and by the power of love and hope, above all the temptations which at any time assault us. That we may *keep ourselves unspotted from the world;* and no appetite of pleasure, of glory, or of riches may ever carry us from our duty; but we may still cleave to thee in righteousness, purity, humility, charity, and all other divine virtues, of which our Lord hath given us so great an example.

For his sake we hope for a favourable acceptance of these our praises, acknowledgments and prayers. For we must be still beholden to thine infinite goodness for the least regard to anything that we can do, who are but unprofitable servants. And we wait upon the same goodness for thy blessing to accompany us all this day, that we may do nothing but what we know is pleasing to thee, and may be so prospered, protected and assisted by thine Almighty power, that we may return with our hearts full of love and thankfulness to thee in the evening, again to praise and magnify thy continued kindness to us.

Unto which we commend most heartily the rest of mankind; desiring that they may all know thee, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; whom to know is eternal life. And O that all Christians would walk worthy of thy high and heavenly calling; that others, seeing their good works, may be invited thereby to acknowledge and glorify thee our heavenly Father. More particularly we desire such an increase of wisdom and goodness to all Christian kings and princes, that all their subjects may praise thee for the sensible fruits of their care and good government, and such a plentiful portion of the Spirit of thy grace to all Christian bishops, priests and deacons, that they may be eminent instruments of thy honour, and their people's good, by the authority of their doctrine and their godly example. Make our Sovereign and us all happy in each other, by the faithful discharge of our several duties in the places wherein thy most high wisdom hath set us.

And we desire the comfort of those that mourn, the ease of those that are in pain, the health of the sick, the release of poor prisoners and captives, the quiet and satisfaction of those

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that are in trouble and anguish of mind, and the true content of all men, in whatsoever condition they are; that we may be all continually giving thanks to thee, the Father of mercies, for *the joy thou hast set before us*, and the hope we have, by running our Christian race with patience, to come to that blessed place into which *Jesus our forerunner is already entered for us*[a]. By whom we continue to desire, in his own words, that thou mayest be glorified everywhere in our well-doing; saying, as he hath taught us,

Our Father, &c.

At night.

O LORD, the Almighty Creator and Governor of the world: *how great and manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all*[b]. *The day is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun*[c]. We thy creatures, a small part of mankind, prostrate ourselves before thee this evening, in the humblest adoration of thy divine Majesty; praising thy incomprehensible perfections, and rendering thee our thanks for all the benefits thou hast bestowed on the whole world, especially on us whom thou hast called to the knowledge of thy grace in Christ Jesus. It is a marvellous love wherewith thou hast loved us. Thou hast not dealt so with all people; and as for thy great and precious promises they have not known them.

We are bound therefore more particularly to offer up unto thee continually spiritual sacrifices by Christ Jesus, and to laud and bless thy great and glorious name in the behalf of ourselves and the rest of mankind; among whom thou hast left innumerable testimonies of thy careful providence, in that *thou dost them good, and givest them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness*[d]. We praise thee, we bless thee, we magnify and extol thy wise and powerful goodness, we thank thee for thy never-ceasing bounty towards us, especially that thou hast vouchsafed to send Jesus Christ to restore us by his appearing among us, and his humbling himself to death for us, and his glorious resurrection

[a] [Hebr. xii. 2; vi. 20.] [b] Psal. civ. 24. [c] lxxiv. 16.
[d] Acts xiv. 17.

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from the grave, and ascension on high, to a blessed hope of thy mercy unto eternal life.

We can do no less than devote ourselves, souls and bodies, eternally to thee; returning what we have received from thee back again with the greatest love, and most grateful acknowledgments. Accept, we pray thee, O most gracious and merciful Father, of this small oblation we make thee of our most hearty and unfeigned resolutions to worship and serve thee in the constant exercise of righteousness, mercy, meekness, patience, humility, and purity, with whatsoever is lovely and of good report. And we humbly beg thy Holy Spirit may constantly accompany us; enabling us to think of these things, to cleave unto them, to delight in them, and to persevere in a free and willing performance of all our duty towards thee, and towards all men, to our lives' end.

And we most heartily desire the rest of mankind may at last be so happy as to come acquainted with the exceeding riches of thy grace in Christ. O that *thy ways may be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations*[e]; *that all the gentiles may rejoice with thy people, and we may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee our God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*[f]. O that all idolatry and ungodliness, all cruelty and filthiness, all rapine and violence, may be abolished and rooted out of the earth; and true piety, righteousness, holiness, and brotherly kindness may flourish in the room thereof. For which end we beseech thee endue all kings and princes, especially those that are Christian, with a great sense of thy sovereign authority over all; that they may humbly obey thee, as they desire others should obey them, and govern all their people with great wisdom, uprightness, and a tender compassionate care of their welfare. O that no covetousness, ambition, or revenge may rule in any hearts, provoking them to war and bloodshed; but there may be great peace in all lands by observing the holy laws of the Prince of peace, Christ Jesus.

More particularly we recommend unto thy blessing these kingdoms wherein we live; beseeching thee to be merciful to our sins, in giving us grace to repent of them, and to bring

[e] Psal. lxvii. 2. [f] Rom. xv. 10, 16.

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forth fruits meet for repentance and amendment of life. Bless our sovereign, and all that are employed under him, either in spiritual or civil affairs, with all those graces which are necessary for the right discharge of their duties in such high places. Prosper all their pious endeavours for the good either of men's souls or outward estates; that true religion and virtue increasing, and all ungodliness and vice being put to shame, we may become a renowned nation, and *a praise in the earth*[f]. We commend to thee also, O Father of mercies, all those who are in a distressed and sorrowful condition; most earnestly desiring their seasonable relief and comfort, with their release from those troubles when thou pleasest.

And now that we are going to lay down ourselves to sleep, we put ourselves and our habitations, with all that belong unto us, into thy most gracious protection, hoping thou wilt take care of us, when we cannot so much as think how to secure ourselves from any danger that may approach us. Thou hast been our helper, keeper, and defender, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will we still rejoice.

When we close our eyes, let these holy thoughts of thee and affections towards thee still remain in us and possess our hearts, that they may awake again with us in the morning, and send up our souls in renewed love, and thanks, and praise to thy divine Majesty by our blessed Saviour and Redeemer Christ Jesus. In whose words we continue to implore thy mercies towards us.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c."

SATURDAY MORNING.

O Lord, all thy works praise thee and declare the greatness of thy majesty, power, wisdom and bounty, which surpass all understanding. *Thou art good unto all, and thy tender mer-*

[f] [Isai. lxii. 7.]

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cies are over all thy works. Thou art holy in all thy ways, and righteous in all thy doings; and keepest truth for ever. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. We all decay and perish, the heavens themselves wax old like a garment; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end[f].

We adore thee, O Lord most high, and most willingly join our hearts and voices this morning, together with all the host of heaven and earth, to laud and praise thy glorious name; and give thanks unto thee, whose mercy endureth for ever. We think ourselves happy that we know thee, and that we live under the care and providence of thine almighty and most wise goodness; and that we have a good hope, not only of thy blessing and favour here, but of life for evermore.

Blessed be thy name for sending thy Son Jesus to give us these hopes by his death and resurrection and ascension to heaven, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Blessed be thy name, who hast trained us up in his religion, and given us the means and opportunities to know that love of thine which passes knowledge. We thank thee for all the blessed operations and motions of thy Holy Spirit in our hearts, and that thou hast so early inclined us to fear thee, and love thee, and place our contentment and satisfaction in thy love and favour, which is better than life itself. And that thou hast also added a number of other mercies for our comfortable subsistence in this world: having granted us so long health, peace, and plenty, a great many friends, loving relations and acquaintance; and continued the enjoyment of them to this day, though we be so unworthy of the least of thy favours. We thank thee, O God, that now thou hast graciously renewed thy kindness unto us, in protecting us the last night from all the powers of darkness, and every evil accident, and raising us up this morning in health and safety to praise thy goodness.

More especially we praise thee for any sense we have of these thy mercies; humbly waiting on thee for the increase of it, and for thy gracious pardon of all our unthankfulness and undutiful behaviour towards thee, which we most heartily bewail, and desire and will endeavour to amend.

And for that end we implore the help of thy Holy Spirit,

[f] [Ps. cxlv. 9, 13, 17; cxlvi. 6; cii. 26, 27.]

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which our Lord hath encouraged us to ask of thee; and told us thou wilt not deny to those that earnestly seek it, and continue to knock importunately at the gate of mercy for it. We believe all his promises to be faithful and true: and therefore humbly depend on thy mighty power to strengthen and enable us to do our duty towards thee, and towards all men, with care and diligence, and zeal, and perseverance to the end. Endue us, good Lord, with a spirit of true and fervent devotion to thee our Creator and Redeemer; with upright, just, and charitable hearts to all our neighbours; and with temperate, contented and humble minds, in every condition and state of life unto which thou shalt please to call us.

Help us to be meek and gentle in our conversation; prudent and discreet in ordering all our affairs; good and useful in every relation; observant of thy fatherly Providence in every thing that befalls us; grateful for thy benefits; patient under thy chastisements; and readily disposed to every good word and work. Preserve in us a constant remembrance of thine all-seeing eye; of the many promises and vows we have made of fidelity to thee; of thine inestimable love in Christ Jesus, whereof thou hast given us so many pledges; and of the great account we must give to him, the Judge of all, at the day of his appearing: that so we may continue *steadfast and unmoveable, and be abundant in the work of the Lord; knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*[f].

Deliver us, we beseech thee, from all inordinate cares and desires; from vain hopes and causeless fears; and so dispose our hearts that death itself may not be dreadful to us; but we may welcome it with a cheerful countenance, when and howsoever it shall approach.

O that our hearts may be so firmly settled and established in the true religion, and our minds kept so free from all delusions, that nothing may affright us, or shake our constancy; but we may rather choose to die than dishonour our Saviour who died for us. We resign ourselves to thy wisdom and goodness, who knowest what is best for us; hoping thou wilt *never suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, and wilt with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it*[g].

[f] [1 Cor. xv. 58.] [g] 1 Cor. x. 13.

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We commend unto thee likewise all mankind, especially thy church and chosen people; these kingdoms more particularly, of which we are members; that we may be all faithful to our Lord Christ, and zealous of good works. Bless our sovereign, his counsellors, his ministers, and all employed in public business, whether spiritual or civil; that they may be conscientiously industrious, and whatsoever they do may prosper for the good of all those who are committed to their charge. Be gracious to all our friends, and those who are dear unto us. Keep us all in thy fear, and love, and obedience, while we live; and make us willing to die, and to be with Christ, which is best of all. Guide us, good Lord, and govern us by the same Spirit of wisdom and goodness, that we may be so united to thee here, as not to be eternally separated when thou art pleased to order our departure hence; but that we all at last may have an happy meeting in the other and better world; to dwell with thee in love and joy that shall never die, through Christ Jesus our blessed Lord and Saviour, in whose words we still beseech thee to hear us. Our Father, &c.

At night.

All honour and glory, thanks and praise, love and service, be rendered by us and all other reasonable creatures, to thy great and glorious majesty, O Lord, who hast brought us into the world, and preserved our life most tenderly to this moment; and made it easy and comfortable to us by more mercies than we can number: and to all the former hast added those of this day, which we have passed in peace, and health, and safety; blessed be thy never-ceasing goodness. Above all, we acknowledge thy unconceivable love in Christ Jesus, by whom thou hast made a gracious provision for our souls and their everlasting happiness in the other world, having sent him to us with the promises of eternal life, and to be the way and director to it; and given him to die, that he might seal his promises with his blood; and raised him again from the dead, that our faith and hope might be in thee, O God.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither did enter into the heart of man the things which thou hast prepared for them

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that love thee[h]. We love thee, O Lord, and give ourselves, both souls and bodies, to thee; most earnestly desiring to be inspired with such a sense of thy infinite goodness, that we may love thee more and serve thee better; with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength.

We confess we have not walked worthy of the great benefits we have received, and therefore may justly fear thou shouldest withhold thy tender mercies, and shut up thy loving-kindness in displeasure. But the desires and holy resolutions thou hast wrought and continuest in our souls, to amend and become still more fruitful in all good works, encourage us to hope in thee for pardon through the blood of Jesus Christ; and for the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to enable us to accomplish that which we intend and purpose, to grow more and more in wisdom and knowledge, and in righteousness and true holiness.

O that this image of thine may appear every day fairer and more beautiful before thee, and in the sight of all men! That so we may adorn the religion we profess, and be a good example unto others; and have a solid foundation of peace and comfort in our own hearts, and be able to hope in thee for thy future mercy in Christ Jesus even unto eternal life.

We commend ourselves to thy wonted grace; and in a sense of what thou hast done already for us, and what thou hast promised to do, depend on thy goodness for what thou seest profitable and conducing to our chiefest good: referring ourselves wholly to thy wise will and pleasure, and resolved contentedly to submit to thy appointments, thankfully to receive thy mercies, and to rest satisfied with our portion, whatsoever it be that thou orderest for us. Make us but steadfast in thy faith and love, unwearied in well-doing, patient and constant under all sufferings, full of a lively hope in thy mercy, and willing to die when and as thou pleasest; and we have enough.

In confidence that thou hearest us, and art everywhere, and never slumberest nor sleepest, we commit ourselves to the custody of thy watchful Providence this night; to be secured and protected by thee, when we cannot at all attend to our own preservation. May it please thy goodness to give this whole family a comfortable rest and repose; to defend this habitation

[h] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

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and all about us from fire and such like sad accidents; to deliver us from the power of evil spirits, and of evil men; and to raise us in health and cheerfulness to praise thee, and to glorify thee, both in soul and body, the next day.

Then will we sing of thy power, yea, we will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning; because thou hast been our defence and our refuge at all times. Unto thee, O our Strength, will we sing, for God is our defence, and the God of our mercy[i]. *We will praise the Lord with our whole heart, in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation*[k]. *For it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High; to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night*[l].

The earth is thine and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein[m]. *Let all the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee; O that all the ends of the world would remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations*[n]. Bless especially all Christian kings and princes, that it may *be an abomination to them to commit wickedness; and their thrones may be established by righteousness*[o]. And incline the hearts of all those who have any authority in these kingdoms to love and hold fast thy true religion, and to live according to it; that *by mercy and truth the king may be preserved; and his throne be upholden by mercy. Let him faithfully judge the poor, that his throne may be established for ever*[p].

We heartily desire the ease, peace, and satisfaction of all those who are in pain, trouble, and perplexity; and that all poor miserable people may find supply of their wants from thy bounty, and the charity of those on whom thou hast bestowed plenty and abundance. We humbly also wait for thy blessing upon all our relations and friends, trusting in thee for such a measure of health and all other good things as thou judgest useful for us; and especially that the Lord Jesus *will deliver*

[i] Ps. lix. 16, 17. [k] Ps. cxi. 1. [l] Ps. xcii. 1, 2. [m] Ps. xxiv. 1. [n] Ps. lxvii. 3, 5; xxii. 27, 28. [o] Prov. xvi. 12. [p] Prov. xx. 28; xxix. 14.

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us from every evil work, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen[q].

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c."

A shorter morning prayer for any day in the week, when there is not time, by reason of some extraordinary occasions, for the other.

O most great and glorious God, the Sovereign of the world, upon whom we continually depend; to whom we owe all the love, the service, and the praise that we are able to render to all eternity: we adore thy infinite mercy, from whence we have received so many blessings for the comfort of this life, and by which we have a sure hope of good things in the life to come. Blessed be thy goodness, which hath not suffered us to wander without instruction after the foolish desires of our own hearts, but hast clearly shown us where our happiness lies. We receive with all thankfulness those holy words which teach us the blessedness of poverty and contentedness of spirit; of meekness and humility of mind; of hungering and thirsting after righteousness; of mercifulness and purity of heart; of peaceableness and patient suffering for doing the will of our Lord Christ.

O that we may have grace to labour always to be of the number of those blessed souls that never set their hearts on anything so much as these heavenly virtues! O that we may ever think and feel ourselves happy in the comfort of those great and precious promises of being made the children of the Highest, the heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and at last of seeing thee our God! It suffices, O Lord, that we have these glorious hopes hereafter, which make us believe thou wilt not let us want what is necessary for us whilst we continue here. We commend ourselves with an humble confidence to thy

[q] 2 Tim. iv. 18.

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watchful providence this day: beseeching thee to guide and assist us, that in all our desires, words, and actions we may keep ourselves innocent and undefiled before thee, and be disposed to do all good as we have opportunity.

And we heartily desire that all mankind may be filled with the same devotion to thee; and especially that all Christian people may glorify thy name, and be joyful in thee. And the greater any are in dignity and power, raise their spirits to the greater pitch of wisdom, mercy, and piety; that they may right those that suffer wrong, and defend those that have no helper, and provide for the ease and comfort of all miserable creatures to the utmost of their power. In this ardent charity we commit both souls and bodies to thee, beseeching thee to increase our love to thee and to all men, till we be fit to be translated to the region of love and joy and perfect satisfaction, through Christ Jesus, who hath taught us, when we pray, to say,

Our Father, &c.

Another short prayer for the morning.

O blessed God, be thou acknowledged, praised, and loved by us, and all the children of men on whom thou pourest continually thy benefits. They are great and many; we know not the sum, nor understand the value of them. The angels themselves admired thy love to us in Christ Jesus, and are become ministering spirits to them who are heirs of salvation. We enjoy the continual fruits of thy watchful providence, by which we have been kept in peace and safety the last night, and are raised this morning in health and strength, both of body and mind, beholding all things belonging to us just as we left them with thee when we went to sleep.

Accept, we most humbly beseech thee, of this poor tribute of praise and thanks, together with the hearty oblation of our souls and bodies, which we here dedicate again to thy service. Vouchsafe us the continued assistance of the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to enable us to make good those vows that are upon us, "of obediently keeping thy holy will and commandments, and walking in the same all the days of our life." Pardon, good Lord, all our breaches of this sacred covenant. Deal not with

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us according to our sins, neither reward us after our iniquities; but in the multitude of thy tender mercies pity our errors and wanderings, and help us against our infirmities.

Give us leave this day to put ourselves into thy powerful protection, and to depend on thee for thy merciful guidance and assistance, that we may be more faithful to thee in the discharge of our duties, and never swerve from the rules of sobriety, righteousness, charity, and godliness. So shall we return with joyful hearts to praise thee in the evening; and teach those who shall come after us to continue thy praises in the next generation. Amen, for thy mercies' sake in Christ Jesus; in whose words we present the earnest desires of our hearts for ourselves and all our brethren, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A short prayer for the evening when there is no time for the longer.

O God, we, thy creatures, who have tasted liberally of thy bounty many ways, and been blessed in our several employments, and mercifully preserved from several dangers this day, are here met to join together in most hearty thanksgivings to thy divine Majesty; which with one accord we offer up unto thee. It is the greatest happiness of all, we acknowledge, that we have any sense of thee in our minds; any love to thee in our hearts; any remembrance of thy benefits; any holy dispositions to obey thee; and any hopes that thou wilt pardon our sins, and make us partakers of eternal life.

All that we desire of thee, O Lord, is the continuance and increase of this happiness, that we may be possessed with a stronger sense of thy Majesty, thy sovereign power, thy unsearchable wisdom, goodness, and truth; and be filled with a more ardent love to thee, and to all righteousness; and delight to do thy will in everything, and rejoice in hope of thy immortal glory. As for all the things of this life, in a grateful remembrance of thy many past mercies, we entirely trust thee for the time to come, referring ourselves to thy wisdom, and resolving to be content with that portion which thy good providence is pleased to assign us. Help us but to be steadfast and unmovable in the work of our Lord, to bring forth all the

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fruits of the Spirit, *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance*[r]; and we shall think ourselves rich enough, and well provided for in every state and condition of life.

In these holy thoughts and desires we commend ourselves to thy gracious protection this night, hoping to find them fresh and lively in our souls when we awake in the morning; and desiring withal the happiness of the rest of the world, that they may know thee, and acknowledge thee, and be guided unto and walk in the way that leads to everlasting life, through Christ Jesus our blessed Redeemer. In whose powerful name and comprehensive words we continue to pray as he hath taught us, saying,

Our Father, &c.

Another for the evening.

In an humble and thankful sense, O Lord of heaven and earth, of our entire dependence on thee, and of the duty we owe thee, and the many promises and vows wherein we stand engaged to thee, we fall down before thee this evening, and with all reverence worship thy divine Majesty: giving thee the glory that is due unto thy name, and acknowledging thy multiplied mercies to us, particularly those of this day, to the conclusion of which thou hast now safely brought us, with new resolutions in our hearts to continue for ever in thy faith, and fear, and love, and obedience.

It is but just and reasonable, and we feel likewise, by daily experience, that it is our happiness, to keep thy commandments, and to maintain cheerful thoughts of thee, and an hearty friendship with thee by complying in all things with thy holy will. O pardon our folly, most gracious God, in forsaking at any time that perfect rule to follow our own unruly desires. Pardon us, we beseech thee, for we know not how to pardon ourselves such ingratitude to thee and cruelty to ourselves. It is the grief of our hearts that we have in the least offended thee; and our most earnest, unfeigned desire to be preserved hereafter in an exact conformity to our rule in everything. Yea, we would delight to do thy will, O God,

[r] [Gal. v. 22, 23.]

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and take such a pleasure in all the acts of righteousness, mercy, meekness, and gentleness to our neighbours, and in praising and acknowledging thee, the God of all grace, and living in an humble sense of thy bounty and our own undeservings, and in a temperate and thankful use of all thy blessings, that we may have the continual feast of a good conscience, and the constant comfort and satisfaction of having thee always for our friend, and our gracious Father in Christ Jesus.

O thou who art the Inspirer of such holy counsels, desires, and purposes, keep them for ever in our hearts: encourage, strengthen, and increase them, that after the refreshment of a quiet sleep this night, we may feel them lively and powerful in the morning; and with renewed joy we may still devote ourselves to thy faithful service. O that our friends, and all thy people in every place, may partake of the same mercies we desire for ourselves! and howsoever we are severed one from another in this world, grant us an happy meeting at the day of our Lord; in whose words we pray thee to hear us.

Our Father, &c.

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PRAYERS

FOR PARTICULAR PERSONS.

A prayer for the morning, to be said by any person alone.

O most holy, blessed, and glorious Majesty of heaven and earth, who art before all things, because they all receive their being from thee, and who art of thyself infinite in all perfections; before thee, who art so great and incomprehensible, I most humbly prostrate myself this morning, rejoicing in this happy liberty which thou vouchsafest me of retiring my thoughts a little from this world, to look up unto thee, the Father of my being.

I adore and praise thy eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. I heartily acknowledge the duty which I owe thee, both as I am thy creature, and as I am a Christian. I bewail all my neglects of it, my backwardness unto it, or coldness in it. I entreat thy gracious pardon, and engage myself for the time to come more heartily and firmly to thy obedience; beseeching the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to enable me to perform all those engagements which are upon me. And blessed be thy fatherly goodness, which hath so often prevented me with that grace. I owe to it all the good thoughts and inclinations that are in my heart; all those motions that I feel in my soul towards thee, as my chiefest good; with all the effects and fruits of them in my life and actions; which encourage me to hope in thee for the constant help of it, to further me in well-doing unto the end.

O thou who hast sent thy Son from heaven to dwell among us; who hast not spared his life, but given him up for us all; who hast raised him from the dead, and made him heir of all things; who hast given him all power in heaven and earth, that he may bless us, and do us good: deny not the desires of a soul that offers up itself entirely in sincere affection to thy

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service; but assist me so mightily from above, that I may make thee my constant acknowledgments likewise for the sensible fruits of his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation, produced in my heart; growing more and more in all wisdom, righteousness, purity, humility, goodness, and every other divine virtue. For which end, preserve me always in such a serious temper of mind, that the sense of my duty to thee may make me always ready and forward to it; and the sense of my weakness may make me watchful and diligent; and the sense of my former negligence excite me to be fervent in spirit; and the goodness of thy commands may render me more fruitful and abundant in the work of the Lord; and the great danger I have escaped, and the blessedness before me, may provoke me to persevere most patiently in all well-doing with joy and thankfulness: so that I may be like to Christ Jesus, my gracious Lord and Master, and do him honour here in this world, and walk worthy of the great privileges he hath bestowed on me, and make grateful returns for all the vast receipts I have had from thy most bounteous mercy. O that all my acknowledgments and pious affections may be turned into actions of holiness and piety; and all my actions may be spirited with zeal; and all my zeal be regulated with prudence; and my prudence be void of all guile, and joined with perfect integrity of heart; that, adorning thy most holy faith and profession by a religious, upright, charitable, and discreet conversation whilst I am here, I may receive approbation and praise at the day of the Lord Jesus, and be numbered among thy saints in glory everlasting!

This, O Lord, is the sum of all my desires. Dispose me, by everything that befals me, for eternal life, and it sufficeth. I wholly leave my concerns in this life to the wisdom of thy goodness, that thou mayest order what thou judgest to be fittest for me. I trust thee with myself and all I have; hoping thou wilt preserve me from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable for my salvation.

The like I wish to all the world: that unbelievers may be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of thy dear Son; and they who are called by the name of Christ may depart from all iniquity. Inspire all kings and princes of the earth, especially our sovereign, with great wisdom and charity; and make them like to thee, the Lord of all, who art

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good unto all, and pleased in mercy. Endue all our pastors and guides with true knowledge, piety, and zeal; and give me and all Christian people grace to receive their instructions with a meek, humble, and obedient heart.

Thou knowest the sorrows, trouble, and perplexities of all afflicted persons; for whom I implore thy compassionate relief. Support them with a lively faith and hope in thy precious promises; dispose them thereby to a more strict observance of thy holy commands; and convert their present sufferings into endless joys, when they have brought forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. And whilst thou art pleased to continue to me that ease, plenty, and prosperity which I enjoy, fill me with such a sense of thy undeserved goodness, that I may be the more ready to do good to those who are in misery, and, by a sober and moderate use of thy blessings, be prepared to endure patiently whatsoever change thou shalt be pleased to order for me into a worse condition.

Preserve me all this day in innocence, and in love to thee and to all men. And since *in all my ways I acknowledge thee, do thou direct my paths,* and teach me to *guide my affairs with discretion*[a]. Thou art my hope and my confidence, my satisfaction and my peace, my glory and my joy; therefore never leave me nor forsake me, but conduct me safely by thy counsel through all the businesses and enjoyments, through all the temptations and troubles of this life, to that blessed place where our Lord Jesus liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, world without end. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A prayer for the evening.

O Lord, the Creator of the world, and the Redeemer of mankind; who knowest all things, and canst do what thou pleasest; and wilt do that which is best for thy children; and hast done us a world of good already; and promised to do more for us, if we be obedient, than we can ask or think; and hast given us the greatest assurance of the truth of those promises by thy Son Jesus, who died for us, and whom thou hast

[a] Prov. iii. 6. Ps. cxii. 5.

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raised from the dead, and given him the promise of the Holy Ghost, which he hath poured forth abundantly, to shed abroad thy love in our hearts: I fall down before thee in the lowliest manner, to express my fear and reverence of thy almighty power; my admiration of and submission to thy unsearchable wisdom; my hearty love and thankful acknowledgment of thy wondrous goodness; my trust and confidence in thy faithful promises; with my readiness and sincere purposes to perform all obedience to thy holy commands.

There is nothing, O Lord, so afflictive to me as the remembrance that I have any time offended thy sovereign authority. I am heartily sorry for the breaking of any of thy sacred, righteous, and good laws. I abhor the thoughts of doing so again; and protest eternal enmity to all that is contrary to thy blessed will, addicting myself with most hearty affection to thy true and faithful service. Pardon me therefore, most gracious and merciful Father, and accept these holy resolutions which thou hast inspired me withal. Strengthen, I beseech thee, and further them with thy continued grace, that no sudden desires, vehement inclinations, ineffectual purposes, no, nor partial performances, may deceive and lead me into a false opinion of myself; but I may bring forth actually, and with a constant spirit, all the fruits of righteousness which are by Christ Jesus, to the praise and glory of thee, my God. Possess me with such a deep and strong sense of thy supreme authority over all, of the obligations I have to thee, and the great kindness thou hast done me in engaging me to be thy servant, that religion may be the very business of my life; and my greatest pleasure may be to please thee in everything; and my highest design to attain that blessed immortality which Christ Jesus hath promised.

O lift up my affections more and more to those things above, where he is; that heaven may have my heart, whilst this world hath my body; and I may have perfect contentment of mind in well-doing and patient suffering; and the good hope I have of being eternally beloved of thee, the Lord of heaven and earth, may make me rejoice evermore. Free me from all inordinate cares for the things of this life; from all distrust of thy good providence; from all repining at anything that befals me: and enable me in everything to give thanks; believing

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that all things are ordered by the greatest reason, and shall work together for good to those that love thee.

I doubt not of thy fatherly affection to those that study in all sincerity to approve themselves unto thee: and therefore still resolve to leave myself entirely to thy wise counsels, that thou mayest dispose me into such a condition as thou seest best for me in this world. Remember me but of my duty, quicken and excite me to it, strengthen me in the doing of it, support me under all discouragements, advise me in all difficult cases, and comfort me with a steadfast belief of thy holy word; and I shall ever be giving thanks and praise unto thee, who dealest so bountifully with me.

Into thy hands I commend this night both soul and body, which have been mercifully preserved in safety all this day. I repose myself in the belief of thy watchful providence; and that thou givest thy angels charge over us, and art about our beds, and about our paths, and spiest out all our thoughts. O continue these holy thoughts and desires in me till I fall asleep, that thou mayest have a soul full of love to thee in thy custody, and I may receive the light of the morning, if thou prolongest my life, with new joy in thee, and thankful affection to thee.

I most heartily desire likewise, O merciful God, the good of the whole world. Pity the follies of mankind: deliver them from their sins, and from their miseries. Hear the groans of every part of the creature that is yet subject to the bondage of corruption, and bring them all into the glorious liberty of thy children. Hear the daily prayers of the catholic church. Free her from all foul and dividing errors: let the truth, as it is in Jesus, prevail, and peace be in all her borders. O that all Christian kings and governors may follow after peace and ensue it! Make thy ministers the messengers of peace; and dispose the hearts of all Christians to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Enlighten the minds of all Jews, Turks and infidels with the knowledge of thy truth. Give repentance unto sinners, and increase of grace and strength to all thy faithful servants. Reduce those that wander out of the way; raise up those who are fallen; confirm and settle those that stand, and grant them a steadfast resolution to persevere in faith, love and obedience. Relieve and comfort all those that are in any distresss. Make

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the earth to bring forth her increase in due season: and let all honest and industrious people be succeeded and blessed in their labours.

Remember all those to whom I am indebted for my birth, education, instruction or promotion: thou who art rich in mercy, reward and recompense their care and love. Grant forgiveness and charity to all my enemies. Continue goodwill among all my kind neighbours. Support the sick in faith and patience. Assist those who are dying and leaving this world. Fit them for a better place; receive the souls which thou hast redeemed with thy Son's most precious blood, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and give us all a glorious resurrection and eternal life. Amen, Amen.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c."

A short prayer to be used by any one alone in the morning.

I adore thee, O Lord, the Possessor of heaven and earth; who surpassest all our thoughts, and dost us good beyond all our desires. There is all reason that I should acknowledge thee continually; that I should worship, and praise, and love, and obey thee, whilst I have my being. I cannot but witness against myself whensoever I neglect thee, much more when I oppose thy most high authority, by doing contrary to thy laws. For thy almighty goodness gave me my being; and by that alone have I been maintained and liberally provided for: yea, it hath borne with me very patiently in my rebellion, and used extraordinary means to make us friends; and ceases not its entreaties after many unkind denials, but continues to importune me, till my heart consent to yield itself entirely to thee.

I cannot withhold myself, O Lord, from thee, when I consider what thou art, and what thou hast been to me; such a tender, gracious and compassionate Father, as my greatest

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affections cannot find words to express. I must again surrender soul and body into thy hands, which have been so long, so lovingly stretched out towards me; resolving to stay with thee, and never to depart away from thee.

For the more I know of thee, the more I find that I must needs love thee; and the more I love thee, the more I desire to love thee, and to resemble thee, and to be beloved of thee. O that I may feel the power of thy love so great in my heart, that it may govern the rest of my passions and affections, and nothing in the world may tempt me to displease thee, but everything provoke me more to love thee, and delight in thee, and obey thee. *For whom is there in heaven that I can desire but thee, or on earth besides thee*[a]*? who art the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; who only hast immortality*[b]; and designest by thy Son Jesus to raise us sinful dust and ashes to a kingdom, glory, honour and immortality in the heavens.

I most earnestly beseech thee that this sense of thee may accompany me wheresoever I go, and in whatsoever I do this day. That approving myself to thee in such a godly, sober, righteous, charitable and prudent behaviour, as may adorn the gospel of my Lord and Master Christ Jesus, I may have a greater assurance of thy goodwill towards me, and an undoubted hope of thy mercy in him to eternal life. In whose most blessed name and words I humbly recommend myself, my friends, and all thy servants to thy infinite charity: saying, as he hath taught us,

Our Father, &c.

Another for the evening.

Blessing, glory, honour and praise, be again returned to thee, O Father of mercy, from a most thankful heart, which offers up itself also in holy devotion to thee: who art my sovereign Lord, my most loving Saviour, my Deliverer and Benefactor; the fountain of all the good things I enjoy at present, and the hope of my soul for ever and ever. Blessed

[a] [Ps. lxxiii. 25.] [b] [1 Tim. vi. 15.]

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be thy renewed kindness to me this day past, both to myself and my relations, to my soul and my body, in my transactions with men, and in the liberty thou allowest me of addresses to thyself. Pardon, good Lord, whatsoever hath escaped me in thought, word, or deed, contrary to my duty: and accept of those sincere intentions and unfeigned purposes, which were, and I hope shall always be in my heart, to study to approve myself to thee in all welldoing.

It is but just and reasonable that I should follow thy will, and not my own; and in a grateful sense of what I have received from thee, I ought to be moved to employ all the powers of my soul and body for thee. But such is the goodness of thy will, that it is for my ease and pleasure, and greatest happiness, to be absolutely led and governed by it. I am sensible, O Lord, how much I am indebted to thee for teaching me by Christ Jesus, and also strongly obliging me to exercise myself to all godliness, purity, righteousness, humility, goodness and truth. And accordingly, I thank thee, above all things, for his holy instructions and example; for the hope thou hast given us by his blood, that thou wilt be so merciful to our sins, as not to deny us the power of thy Holy Spirit to enable us to follow him, and obey his commands; and for that exceeding great and precious promise which he hath given us of immortal life, to encourage us to follow him willingly and cheerfully, even to the death.

O that I may feel a lively and steadfast faith in his word, continually working with great power in my heart; exciting me to an unwearied diligence, and zeal, and love, and patient continuance in my duty towards thee, and towards all men: that so my hope in thee may grow and increase, and I may joyfully expect that hour which shall translate me hence to the eternal happiness of the other world. And during my stay here I commend myself to thy good providence, which hath hitherto been so tender of me. I trust thee wholly with myself, and all belonging to me; and am willing in everything to be disposed of as thou seest good. This night I flee unto thy almighty protection; hoping thou wilt keep me safely, and whether I awake in this or the other life, I shall still be praising thee, whose mercy endureth for ever, Amen; for Christ Jesus his sake; by whom thou hast encouraged

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me to hope in thee, and taught me to call thee Father, saying,

" Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, &c."

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THAT time which is wont to be spent in the church in talking or looking about before divine service begin, may be better employed in private prayer, to dispose us to join with greater seriousness in the public. And indeed our business being there with God alone, and that place being separated for his service only, the custom which now universally prevails of entertaining discourse one with another is very undecent (to say no worse), and ought to be reformed. We have other times and places enough to confer with our neighbours, and therefore have no temptation to pervert the use of this, which is set apart for devout intercourse with God and none else, by speaking to him in prayer and praises, and hearing him speak to us in his holy word. It is fit to silence all other speech; and therefore here follow some helps for that purpose, which I hope all good Christians will endeavour to use or imitate, and not despise this loving admonition.

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PRIVATE PRAYERS IN THE CHURCH.

A short prayer before divine service begins.

Behold, O Lord of heaven and earth, a soul prostrate before thee, desirous to be filled with such an awful sense of thy divine Majesty that no other thing may interpose itself while I am in thy presence. Fix my inconstant thoughts in a steadfast attention to thy most holy word. Inspire me with devout affections when I set forth thy praise and render thanks for all thy benefits. And excite in me such fervent desires for all those things which I ask of thee, that I may feel myself better disposed, by these addresses to thee, to every Christian duty the rest of this day: through Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Another.

In an humble and thankful sense of thine infinite goodness, which honoureth us so much as to speak to us and give us leave to speak to thee, I bow down myself before thee, O most high and holy Lord, the Creator of the world, desiring my mind may be possessed with such great thoughts of thee, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and who openest thy hand and fillest all things with good, that I may most reverently worship thee; and affectionately acknowledge thy bounty; and set my heart open to receive thy holy word; and my mouth may praise thee with joyful lips. Silence all other thoughts and desires in me while I am here in thy presence. And lift up my heart so towards heaven that I may feel it united to that glorious company above, who perpetually praise thee, and rejoice in thee, and do thy commandments, hearkening to the voice of thy word. Which I humbly beg in

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the name of Christ Jesus, which is ever dear unto thee, and by whom thou hast promised to hear us. Amen.

Or those words of the Prophet David (which you read Ps. v. 7, xvii. 1, cxviii. 28, cxix. 47, 48, &c.) *may be a little altered in this manner.*

In the multitude of thy mercies I come into thy house, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy place. Attend unto my cry, O Lord, and give ear unto my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, and I will exalt thee. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved, and I will meditate on thy statutes. Let thy tender mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation according to thy word. Look upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do to those that love thy name. Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Amen.

A longer prayer in the church, when there is time for it, before the beginning of divine service.

I cast down myself, O Lord, in an holy fear and humble adoration of thine incomprehensible Majesty, who fillest heaven and earth, but delightest to make thyself more peculiarly present to those that acknowledge and praise thee, and are desirous to be filled with a constant sense of thee, and entire love to thee. Blessed be thy infinite goodness, which hath encouraged such wretches as I am, by the declaration of thy good will to us in Christ Jesus, by thy most gracious invitations and precious promises, and by the long experience I have had of thy kindness, to approach unto thee, O Lord most high.

I accept most thankfully of this freedom and liberty of access with confidence by the faith of Jesus; and am here to join with the rest of thy servants in extolling and magnifying thy eternal power, wisdom, and goodness; in giving thanks to thee for thy innumerable blessings; in hearing thy most holy word, and making our humble supplications for the continuance of thy undeserved grace and favour towards us. Compose mine

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and every one of our thoughts to the most silent admiration of thee: strike our spirits with a reverend apprehension of the surpassing greatness and glory of thy Majesty: raise our affections to the highest pitch of love and gratitude to thee: bow our wills to the most cheerful submission to all thy holy commands; and touch us with an unspeakable joy when we read and hear thy exceeding great and precious promises.

Vouchsafe, most loving Father, the power of thy Holy Spirit to attend upon me, to draw my mind from all other things, and to give me such a lively taste of the pleasures of thy house as may make me ever delight to attend upon thee here, and walk with thee in every other place with a perfect heart. That so my own *heart not condemning me, I may have more and more confidence towards thee, that whatsoever I ask I shall receive of thee, because I keep thy commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in thy sight*[a]. *Truly my soul waiteth upon thee; from thee cometh my salvation*[b]. *Hear my cry, O God, and attend unto my prayer*[c], for the honour of our Lord Jesus, and the love thou bearest to him, who hath bid us ask, and we shall receive; seek, and we shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto us. Let it be to thy servant, I most ardently beseech thee, according to his word. Amen.

Another more large.

O Lord of heaven and earth, who art infinite and incomprehensible in thy being, eternal in thy duration, and unchangeable in thy nature, who canst do what thou wilt, and delightest in doing us good: by thy power I and all creatures were made; by thy wisdom we are governed; by thy goodness and bounty we are provided for; under thy sovereign dominion we live; and unto thy Majesty we owe all reverence, service, and faithful obedience. I adore and humbly worship thee. I acknowledge myself bound by innumerable ties to fear thee, to love thee, to praise thee, and to serve thee with all my heart, and soul, and strength. Blessed be thy goodness, that I have any hope thou wilt accept of such a worthless thing as my love.

[a] 1 John iii. 21, 22. [b] Ps. lxii. 1. [c] lxi. 1.

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Blessed be thy goodness, I admire at the riches of thy grace, that thou dost not reject all the service that I can tender thee. Nay, it is to be ascribed to thee alone that I am alive to worship thee, and have the doors of thy house stand open to me; and that I have any heart to enter into it to offer up spiritual sacrifices by Christ Jesus.

O God, I offer thee here my whole self, which is all due to thee, because I received it all from thee, beseeching thee most earnestly to make me feel that I am not mine own any longer, but thine, by taking off my thoughts and affections from all other things at this present, and filling me with such a reverent apprehension of thee, such hearty devotion to thee, and heavenly joy in thee, that I may every day offer up myself to thee more holy and more pure, more meek and merciful, more humble and thankful, more cheerfully disposed to every good work, and better prepared to bear a part in the praises and services of the glorious company above.

Thou knowest the weakness of our nature, how soon our thoughts are tired, and apt to start aside when we direct them towards heaven. Vouchsafe me therefore the assistance of thy Holy Spirit to compose my mind to the most serious, the most earnest, the most devout and cheerful attention in all parts of thy divine service. That I may have the liveliest sense of thy glorious perfections when I praise thee; and the most delightful remembrance of thy mercies when I give thee thanks; and the most thirsty desires to be conformed to thy will, and to feel more and more the influences of thy grace when I hear thy holy word, and present my prayers and supplications before thee.

Accept, O blessed God, of this good will and sincere affection that I have to thy service, though performed with broken and distracted thoughts, and with too great listlessness and dulness of spirit. And help me continually to outgrow this weakness, and to present thee with an heart more quiet, calm, and fit to receive thee; more perfect and entire in ardent love to thee, and more settled and fixed in thee, as its chiefest joy and happiness; that so all the rest of the actions of my life may be a more constant and even performance of my duty, according to the command and example of my blessed Lord and Master Christ Jesus. In whose name it is that I am bold to approach

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into thy presence, believing the power and authority thou hast given him over all to bless us, and to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. By him be glory unto thee, O Father Almighty, in the church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

At the conclusion of divine service, after these words, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. *say,* Amen, *with the heartiest and most earnest affection: and add some such words as these.*

Blessed be thy name, O God, for the good hope which thy infinite charity hath given us by thy great grace in Christ Jesus, and the plentiful communication of the Holy Ghost. O let thy mercy be upon me according as I hope in thee. Preserve me alway in thy love, through that abundant grace in thy Son Christ, and the powerful presence of thy Holy Spirit work in me mightily, this day and ever.

Or after "The peace of God which passeth all understanding," &c. *you may say as the apostle St. Paul* (2 Thess. iii. 16) *and the Psalmist,* CXV. 12, 13, 18.

Now the Lord of peace himself give me peace always by all means. The Lord be with us all. The Lord hath been mindful of us, he will bless us. He will bless them that fear him, both small and great. And we will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

A short prayer for the Lord's day, or any other, to be used at home before morning service.

O Lord, the almighty Creator of the world, and the merciful Saviour of mankind, who art above all our thoughts, and excellest the praises of the highest angels: *thou art greatly to be feared in the assembly of thy saints, and to be had in reverence of all those that are about thee*[d]. I most humbly desire leave to join myself with all those holy ones, to worship thy most glorious Majesty, to express the due sense I have of all

[d] [Ps. lxxxix. 7.]

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thy benefits, (by paying thee my most thankful acknowledgments for them,) to make thee the best oblation I am able, and devote myself entirely to thy obedience.

Since thou hast graciously inclined me to go into thy house, and there to set forth thy praise, to declare thy loving-kindness, to resign myself to thy will, to recommend myself to thy wisdom, to submit to thy government, to approve the justice and goodness of all thy laws, to profess that I am thy servant, to renounce all thy enemies, and to testify my continued purpose to follow thee against all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil; be pleased, good Lord, to pardon all my former failings, and at this present to accept my holy intentions, and to inspire me from above, that I may cheerfully perform all these acts of devotion to thy divine Majesty.

And vouchsafe more fully to inform me in my duty, to correct and amend what is amiss in me, to encourage and strengthen my good resolutions, and to assist me in all well-doing. Fill me with a great love to thee, and to my blessed Saviour; to thy holy word, and to all holy duties; to Christian people every where, and to all mankind. Perfect me in wisdom, in holiness, and in goodness. By all thy instructions, by all thy mercies, by all thy chastisements, and by all my prayers, praises and thanksgivings to thee, the Father of mercies, make me such as thou canst love and delight in, and reward at the great day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

A short prayer at home, after we are come from church, before dinner.

I adore thee again, O Lord of life and glory; I acknowledge my dependence on thee. I thank thee for thy mercies, which thou never ceasest to heap upon me. Accept, I beseech thee, of that dedication I have made of soul and body, with praises and thanksgivings unto thee in the public congregation. Be merciful to all my sins, and endue me with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to enable me to present myself, when I appear again before thee, a more holy and devout sacrifice unto thee; steadfastly resolved and cheerfully disposed in every thing to be ordered by thy will.

For which end be pleased to settle and root in my heart a

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stronger belief of thy holy gospel, and to fix my thoughts and affections upon that unseen happiness and bliss where our Saviour is; that nothing here below may either allure or affright me from my duty, nor ever make me remiss or negligent in it; but I may be zealous of good works, fervent in spirit serving my Lord, from whom I expect the reward of an immortal inheritance.

Preserve in me always a religious sense of thee: and make me now so thankful and sober a partaker of the refreshments of my body, that they may not damp the devotion of my soul: but I may rather return to worship thee with greater cheerfulness and gladness of heart, after thou hast added the good things of this world to those of the other; according to thy abundant love in Christ Jesus. Amen.

A prayer in private, before the evening service.

O God, who art *rich in mercy to all that call upon thee*, and hast bid us *pray without ceasing, and rejoice evermore*[a]. In obedience to thy command, and encouraged by the goodness of thy nature, thy gracious invitations, thy most precious promises, and the long experience that I and others have had of thy bounty, I am bold again to approach into thy presence; to renew my requests unto thee, to bless thy holy name, to make profession of my love to thee, and readiness in all things to obey thee. Quicken my thoughts and affections, O Lord, to a free and joyful attendance on thee in all holy duties; that no dulness nor weariness may seize upon my spirit; but such a fervent love to thee may possess my heart, as may render all the employments of religion my delight, and the doing thy will both now and alway my greatest pleasure.

And pass by, I most humbly beseech thee, all my unwilling indispositions: accept of such service as I am able to render thee; and dispose me by all my address to thee to be more circumspect and watchful, more diligent and industrious, more forward and zealous in the performance of every part of my duty; that being led by thy counsel, governed by thy Spirit, and preserved by thy gracious providence, I may at last be

[a] 1 Thess. v. 16, 17.

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admitted into the company of the blessed; there to perfect my praises and acknowledgments, and to receive the reward of patient continuance in well-doing, through Christ Jesus; whose *grace be with my spirit*[a]. Amen.

Another after the evening service is done, as soon as there is opportunity to retire alone.

I acknowledge thy manifold blessings, O Lord, which are renewed upon me every moment; I owe my life continually to thee, with all the comforts of it. If I had no more to thank thee for but the mercies of this day, they are so many, so great, that I could never thank thee enough for them. Thou takest care of my body and of my soul: thou feedest me at thy house, and at my own: thou lettest me taste the bread of life which came down from heaven, besides the many supports and refreshments which thou affordest for this natural life. Several of thy creatures lose their lives to preserve mine, and thy dear Son hath not thought it too much to lay down his precious life for my sake. Thou speakest to me, and givest me leave to speak to thee. Thou instructest me in my duty, and hast made those things my duty which are really my happiness. Thou engagest me to do myself good here by promising a greater good hereafter.

I praise thee, I thank thee, and will be ever speaking good of thee. And it is a new favour that I may thus praise and bless thee, both in the assemblies of thy people, and in my own retirements. O give me an heart to delight in it, and in all other duties of a Christian life. That obeying thy holy gospel in all things, and being never weary in well-doing, I may find thy unwearied goodness extending itself to immortal life and bliss through Christ Jesus.

O blessed Jesus, that thy holy laws may be more deeply engraven on my heart! O that every truth I have learnt this day may be so faithfully preserved and kept in mind, as to become the rule of my life, or the ground of my hope, and a powerful motive to universal and uniform obedience to the end of my days! O that the remainder of my days may be the better for this day; and the holy rest we observe here on

[a] [2 Tim. iv. 22.]

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earth may be a beginning of the eternal rest which we wait for at thy second coming. Amen, *Come, Lord Jesus.*

A Prayer upon any festival in remembrance of our blessed Lord and Saviour, to be added to the foregoing devotion.

O most glorious God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift; with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of change*[b]: thou always wast and ever wilt be happy without us, or any of the praises that we or any other creatures are able to render unto thee. But it is our duty, our perfection, and high privilege, constantly to acknowledge thee with joy and exultation of spirit, in remembrance of thy infinite bounty to us and to all the world.

Every day tells us how good thou art, and every one of thy creatures calls upon us to magnify thee, and love thee, and serve thee; who hast made so many of them to serve us. But this day gives us occasion to remember thy more special and extraordinary kindness to us the children of men; which calls for our highest and most exalted praises, to be joined with those of the blessed company above, who are never weary of giving honour, glory, blessing and thanksgiving to thee; not only in their own behalf, but even for thy goodness to us thy unworthy creatures.

O how great was that love, which an angel came to give notice of! and which a multitude of an heavenly host celebrated with songs of praise, when thou sentest thy dear Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, to minister to our necessities, to relieve our misery, and to be the way to everlasting life! O the riches of thy grace, that after mankind forfeited all the rights of thy creatures, and had contemned and despitefully used many of thy messengers, thou wouldst in much mercy create us again unto good works, and for that end appear thyself most gloriously among us, in the person of Jesus Christ!

I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast assumed our nature unto such a nearness to thee as we are not able to understand.

[b] James i. 15.

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I thank thee for the glad tidings which Jesus hath brought us from heaven, that thou wilt be reconciled unto us, and admit us again into thy favour; and that he hath fulfilled all righteousness, and shown us in our likeness what thou art, and what thou wouldst have us to be. I thank thee for the redemption which he hath wrought for us by his blood: and I rejoice in the victory which he hath got over hell and the grave by his resurrection from the dead, and in his glorious triumph, when he ascended up on high and led captivity captive; and in his royal power wherewith he was invested when he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and in those gifts which he received for men, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Blessed be thy eternal goodness, which hath made him a most merciful and compassionate high priest; and given us so great assurance that he is become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

Blessed be thy goodness, which hath sent the Holy Ghost; and continued to us a succession of pastors and teachers, to be the guides of our souls, and to minister to us those pledges of thy love which our Saviour hath left us, in the communion of his body and blood.

O God, that my heart could ascend up to heaven in these devout meditations, and in ardent love to thee, who hast loved us in such a marvellous manner! O that it might never come down again to this world, but with desires left in it aspiring towards heaven! Touch my soul so powerfully with a sense of these things, that with an hearty and zealous affection it may ever look towards thee, and towards my dear Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. O fix mine eyes on him, as he was here on earth, that I may learn of him his humble and meek obedience to thy commands; and as he is now in heaven, that I may trust him for the performance of his precious promises, and patiently wait till he carry me to that glorious place where he is enthroned.

Since he appeared among us to destroy the works of the devil, and died to redeem us from all sin, and rose again that he may bless us in turning every one of us from our iniquities, and is made Lord of all that he may govern us by his laws, and reward and punish us according to our works; preserve in

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my mind, I beseech thee, a constant and lively sense of this great end of his whole undertaking for us, that he may see the fruit of the travail of his soul in me, and my whole life may be a serious study and endeavour to imitate him, by purifying myself as he is pure.

O that thy fear and love, and an holy joy in thee, may preserve me this day from abusing any of the good things which thou allowest me for the refreshment of my body. Give me such a savour and relish of thy divine truths revealed to us in the gospel, that I may not glut myself with any fleshly enjoyments, as if I knew no pleasure more excellent; but raise up my mind by them to better delights; that I may enjoy them with thanksgiving to thee, with bowels of mercy to those who are in need, with a taste of spiritual and heavenly joys, and with hunger and thirst after the fulness and perfection of those joys, when our Lord Jesus shall come to show us his glory, and entertain us with eternal satisfaction in his incomprehensible love. Amen.

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A PRAYER ON GOOD FRIDAY.

In the morning.

O most holy and eternally blessed, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am encouraged to come unto thee! And how shall I come, O Lord, but in the lowest prostrations of my soul and body, with mine eyes full of tears, and my heart full of grief and sorrow, because I have been so undutiful to thee, whose grace and mercy hath so exceedingly abounded towards us? When I cast mine eyes upon my Saviour and upon myself, with the rest of the children of men, I am astonished at the wonderful greatness of thy love, which surpasses the thoughts of men and angels.

For what were we that thou shouldest make thy dear Son *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*[a], for our sake? that he should become poor and mean, not having where to lay his head; and endure likewise cruel mockings and buffetings; and be spit upon and abused, yea, sorely wounded and bruised; and drink that bitter cup, that vile and accursed death of the cross, where he shed his most precious blood, and gave himself a ransom for us?

O Lord, what was the whole race of mankind worth, that thou shouldest purchase them with so dear a price? and by the obedience of thy Son Christ Jesus unto the death, grant a pardon for their rebellion? and seal a new covenant of grace in his blood? and by the same blood consecrate him to be an High Priest with royal power in the heavens, to give repentance and remission of sin? and all this so freely, that we did not so much as desire it, nor did it enter into the heart of men to conceive that thou shouldest be so gracious to them.

O blessed God, how rich is thy goodness, that lets us withal enjoy a great plenty of worldly good things, much of that ease and pleasure which was denied our Saviour! and yet we are sinners, and he had *no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*[b]; yea, we are ungrateful sinners, so far from being sen-

[a] [Is. liii. 3.] [b] [1 Pet. ii. 22.]

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sible as we ought of such infinite lovingkindness, that we may justly fear lest this goodness of thine, which was designed to save us, should through our unthankfulness and negligence prove the occasion of our greater ruin.

I most heartily bewail, O most merciful Father, my shameful forgetfulness of so great benefits, or my cold and dull remembrance of them. I lament all the errors and miscarriages of my life, which are the more heinous, I acknowledge, after such a plain declaration of thy displeasure against sin, and of thy marvellous love to us sinners. I am afflicted for the hardness and stupidity of my heart, which, alas! is oftentimes little pierced and wounded when I reflect upon his sorrow and pain and anguish for the sake of sinners; and for the listlessness and backwardness of my will to give up myself absolutely to him who so willingly gave himself an offering for our sins. I blush to remember how weak and short my thoughts have been, how transient and ineffectual my passion when I have meditated on his bloody death and suffering; and am confounded when I think how suddenly I have started from those holy purposes and resolutions which the sense of his love hath sometimes begot in my heart.

I cannot but accuse and condemn myself here in thy presence; but I likewise condemn every sinful desire that is still remaining in me to die and be crucified together with him. I would have nothing contrary to thy will to have any power or live any longer in me, and therefore here yield up myself entirely into thy hands, to be conformed in all things to Christ Jesus, who died for me. Fix my thoughts so constantly upon his dying love, and affect my heart so mightily therewith, that I may cheerfully undergo any pains to be made like unto him in his humility, in his obedience, in his resignation of himself to thy wise will and pleasure, in his patience, in his meekness, in his charity and forgiveness of his enemies, in his willingness to quit all things for thy name's sake; and to trust both soul and body with thee in well-doing and contented suffering, whatsoever it be that thou requirest of me.

I desire not to live, O Lord, but that I may live to him that died for me. I refuse no approaches, no poverty, no pain or trouble, if thy will cannot otherways be accomplished by me. Do what thou pleasest with me, so that I may be but perfected

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in holiness, and obtain thy gracious pardon through the redemption that is in Jesus.

I believe the virtue and power of his sacrifice to be everlasting, and that *when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*[a]; and therefore I look for the constant assistance of thy good Spirit, which he hath bid me ask in his name, to enable me to purify myself, and to tread in the steps of his humble, meek, and patient charity; that so I may be presented unblamable and unreprovable in thy sight at the day of his appearing.

Great is the wisdom of thy love, wherein thy grace hath abounded towards us in Christ Jesus! Great are the encouragements which thou hast given us by his laying down his life for us, that he might take it again, and live for evermore! Great is the *boldness* that we have *to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through his flesh*[b]! Give me the grace, I beseech thee, wisely to consider and ponder the merciful design of thy grace; to walk circumspectly and exactly, as the redeemed of the Lord, as an heir of his love, that hopes to see him in immortal glory. O that the comfort and joy of this hope, to see Jesus, who was so scorned and abused, sitting upon his throne and triumphing over all his enemies, may so raise and enlarge my mind by the power of it, that I may overlook and despise all the petty temptations of this world! looking still steadfastly unto him, and following him with unmovable resolution, till I come to possess that which I hope for, and rejoice eternally in his love.

Hear me, O Father of mercies, and deal graciously with me far beyond all my thoughts and desires, for his sake who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith, who died once for us, and now lives for ever to make intercession on our behalf; by whom all honour, praise, thanksgiving, love, and obedience be rendered to thee by me and by all mankind, both now and for ever. Amen.

A prayer on Good Friday in the evening.

O most holy, most gracious, the only wise God, most blessed for ever; we cannot conceive the greatness of thy perfections.

[a] [Hebr. i. 3.] [b] [Hebr. x. 19, 20.]

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nor is there anything to which we can compare them. Thy holiness is more unspotted than the light of the sun: thy goodness spreads itself more largely than its beams: thy wisdom pierces into those secrets which are buried in darkness; and though all things alter and wax old, yet thou art the same unchangeable Being, whose years have no end. How shall such a vile wretch as I am take the boldness to look towards thee, and speak unto thee, who art so great, so glorious, and dwellest in light not to be approached?

Adored be thy wonderful love, who hast encouraged our approaches to thee, by humbling thyself to look down upon us, and by appearing graciously to us in our own flesh! Blessing, honour, glory, and praise be eternally ascribed unto thee, who didst not abhor us, and utterly cast us out of thy sight, when we had turned our backs upon thee; but sent thy only-begotten Son into the world, to call us again unto thee, yea, beseech us and oblige us, by laying down his own life for us, to return unto thee and live!

No thought can comprehend the unsearchable riches of thy grace manifested unto us in the Lord Jesus, who was pleased to be vilely entreated and shamefully used, to suffer the reproach of the cross, and to shed his dearest blood, that we might not suffer the pain of eternal death, but be restored to the dignity of thy children, and advanced to honour, glory, and immortality together with him. Thou hast found out a way to manifest thy most tender love to us without the least suspicion of approving and loving our sins, and to preserve thy sovereign authority without destroying those who were in rebellion against it. Thou hast ordered such a chastisement of our iniquities as might save and deliver us, who deserved to be punished, and so disposed the means of our redemption as to pardon and amend us both at once.

O the wisdom of thy love, which hath *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of thee our God in him*[a]! O the riches of thy grace, which hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence! *healing us by his stripes*[b], *and condemning sin in the flesh by his sacrifice for sin*[c]; *and making him a curse for us, that*

[a] 2 Cor. v. 21. [b] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [c] Rom. viii. 3.

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we might inherit a blessing[c], *and receive the promise of the Spirit through faith in him*[d]. I see, O Lord, how infinitely I am indebted to thee. I behold the design of thy wise goodness in *giving him for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*[e]. I thank thee with all my soul for *his bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin should live unto righteousness*[f]. There is nothing I can more desire than by *doing righteousness to become righteous, even as he is righteous*[g]. Assist me, I beseech thee, to attain this end of his death and passion by the power of that Holy Spirit which he hath thereby purchased for us, and hath likewise promised to us, and is able to bless us withal.

I dread to think that his precious blood should be lost and spilt in vain for me; that so great a price should be cast away, wherewith thou hast bought me to glorify thee with my body and spirit, which are thine. O God, preserve in me such a lively sense of his grief and sorrow, of his pain and anguish, that I may bitterly hate the cause of all his torments, and look on every sin as the most fearful curse that can befal me. Preserve in me a constant sense of the great value of my soul, for which he paid so dearly, and a great esteem of that purity, righteousness, and goodness, for the restoring of which he *made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross*[h].

And especially raise me to a great height of love and gratitude to thee, and of hope and confidence in thy infinite mercies; of which we have such strong assurance by his being *delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*[i]. Make me more and more in love with that lowliness of mind, that tender and compassionate charity, that meekness, patience, and forgiveness which shone in his sufferings. And subdue my will so perfectly unto such an absolute, quiet, and ready submission to thy holy will in everything, that my hope in thee may increase exceedingly; *and not only so, but I may also joy in thee, my God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement*[j].

[c] [1 Pet. iii. 9.] [d] Gal. iii. 14. [e] Tit. ii. 14. [f] 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[g] 1 John iii. 7. [h] [Phil. ii. 7, 8.] [i] Rom. iv. 25. [j] Rom. v. 11.

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Hear, good Lord, the prayers of the whole church, which thou hast purchased with thine own blood. O that every member thereof may serve thee purely and orderly in the rank and condition wherein thou hast placed them, to their mutual benefit and comfort, and to the conviction of those who are enemies or strangers to the name of the Lord Jesus; that they, seeing our good works, may glorify thee our heavenly Father; and acknowledge that thou art among us of a truth. Bless all the ministers of religion or justice, and endue them with a great love to the honour of our Saviour, and with a great zeal to make his holy laws understood and observed. That, as he *gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;* so *all that name the name of Christ may depart from all iniquity,* and endeavour to be *holy and without blemish*[k], and be found of him in peace at the day of his appearing. And in particular I beseech thee to replenish our sovereign with a great measure of the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that he may make all his subjects joyful by his pious and prudent care to promote their wealth, peace, and godliness. Let thy priests also be clothed with righteousness, and all thy saints shout aloud for joy. *The Lord make them to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men: to the end he may establish their hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*[l].

Now unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen[m].

[k] Eph. v. 26, 27. [l] 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. [m] Rev. i. 5, 6.

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A PRAYER ON ANY SAINT'S DAY.

THOU art to be praised, O Lord of heaven and earth, in all thy works of wonder, which declare the astonishing greatness of thy majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness throughout the world. One generation praises thy works to another, and declares thy mighty acts; especially the manifold wisdom of thy incomprehensible love in the salvation of mankind by Christ Jesus, who hath brought us the glad tidings of peace and reconciliation with thee, and the promise of immortal life and glory if we will be obedient to thee.

An innumerable company of holy souls have in all ages since most thankfully received and acknowledged this thy grace and tender mercy, being obedient to the very death, and leaving us an excellent example of pure love to thee, and constant affection and hearty devotion, and ardent zeal for the honour of our Lord and Master Christ Jesus. I add my poor tribute of praise and thanksgiving to all that hath been rendered unto thee, O God, who, in the beginning, *commandedst the light to shine out of darkness, and hast now shone into the hearts* of thy holy ones *to give the light of thy divine knowledge in the face of Jesus Christ*[a].

Thanks be to thy infinite goodness, as for that glorious manifestation of thyself in our flesh, and the eternal redemption that the Lord Jesus obtained for us by his blood, and the power and dominion which thou hast given him at thy right hand after his resurrection from the dead, and his compassionate intercession on our behalf; so for all those gifts which he gave unto men, whereby *he made some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and the edifying of his body*[b]. Blessing, honour, glory, and praise be to thee, O Father of mercies, for all those great instruments of

[a] [2 Cor. iv. 6.] [b] [Ephes. iv. 11, 12.]

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the Holy Ghost, the illustrious ministers of thy grace, the ambassadors for Christ, and the blessed champions of his holy truth, who have communicated the light of thy glorious gospel to the world, and overcome the kingdom of darkness *by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, not loving their lives unto the death*[c].

Adored be the mightiness of that grace which *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings ordained strength*[d]. Glory be to thee, O Christ, whose *strength was made perfect in weakness*[e]. Glory be unto thee, who didst commit this heavenly *treasure unto earthen vessels; who approved themselves the ministers of God in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tossings to and fro, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of men*[f].

I heartily submit to the power of that divine truth, for which *they suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, that they might win Christ, and be found in him*[g]. And I rejoice that thou hast had so many faithful servants, who have loved thee, O Lord, thou lover of souls, more than their own lives; most earnestly desiring to be inspired with the very same Spirit which was in them, that I may leave some example, though never so small, of hearty and universal obedience to those that shall come after.

Accept, good Lord, of my sincere resolution to be a *follower of them, even as they were of Christ*[h]; *in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in love unfeigned*[i]: *that my rejoicing may be this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by thy grace, I have had my conversation in the world*[j]; *providing for honest things, not only in the sight of our Lord, but also in the sight of all men*[k]. Make me constant and courageous in the profession of thy holy truth; and to be willing *to pass through honour or dishonour, through good report or evil report*, for the Lord's sake; hoping that *if the sufferings of Christ abound in me, my consolation also shall abound by Christ*[l].

[c] Rev. xii. 11. [d] [Ps. viii. 2; Matt. xxi. 16.] [e] 2 Cor. xii. 9.
[f] 2 Cor. iv. 7; vi. 4, 5. [g] Phil. iii. 8. [h] 1 Cor. xi. 1. [i] 2 Cor. vi. 6, 7.
[j] i. 12. [k] viii. 21. [l] i. 5.

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Stir me up, I beseech thee, and quicken me, that I may *show the same diligence* that thy saints have done, *to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that I may not be slothful, but a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*[k]. *How shall I escape if I neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will*[l]*?* O continue the mighty assistance of that divine power with me, that behaving myself *so holily, justly, and unblamably*[m] as they did, I may *rest* at last together *with them, when our Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe*[n].

And now preserve me this day from dishonouring *that worthy name whereby we are called; knowing how we ought to follow them who behaved not themselves disorderly among those that believed*[o]. That by this rest from my ordinary labours I may not learn idleness, nor *grow weary of welldoing*, but be better disposed in my mind by all the refreshments of my body to do my duty, in the place and relations wherein thou hast set me, with greater cheerfulness, fidelity, and diligence to the end of my days. O that it may be my highest pleasure to attend on thee, and praise thee in the assemblies of thy saints. Give me such a sensible delight and joy in reading and meditating of thy holy word, and in the remembrance of all thy mercies, that nothing in this world may make me forget the sweetness of it; but everything may excite me more to praise, extol, and magnify thy lovingkindness to me, and to express my thankfulness in a free and ready obedience to thy commands, till I be made fit to be admitted into the company of the blessed, there to praise thee world without end. Amen.

[k] Heb. vi. 11, 12. [l] ii. 3–5. [m] 1 Thess. ii. 10. [n] 2 Thess. i. 7, 10. [o] James ii. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 7, 13.

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A PRAYER

UPON THE DAY OF ONE'S BIRTH.

O most mighty Lord, the Former and Preserver of all things: all thy works praise thee, and declare thy infinite greatness, wisdom, and bounty; and call upon us likewise to magnify thy name with our continual praises and thanksgivings. I humbly bow myself before thy glorious Majesty, who inhabitest eternity; acknowledging that it is but a little time since I was not, and that I am not gone down again into silence is to be ascribed only to thy omnipotent goodness, which brought me into being, to praise thee among the rest of thy creatures.

I thank thee, O Lord, *by whom I was fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiously wrought in my mother's womb*[p]. *Thou art he that took me thence: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast. By thee I have been holden up ever since*[q]; and most carefully provided for when I could not think at all of thy tender mercies towards me. And therefore now that I am grown to the use of my reason, *my praise ought to be continually of thee*[r]. *O bless the Lord, my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*[s]. *While I live will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have any being*[t].

Pardon, I beseech thee, my ingratitude, in that I have no earlier remembered thee my Creator, *in whom I live and move; and who givest me all things richly to enjoy*[u]. Accept of my unfeigned resolutions to preserve hereafter a more grateful sense of thy great goodness to me, and to glorify thee with my body and with my spirit, which are thine. Vouchsafe me the assistance of thy heavenly grace, that I may return

[p] Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. [q] xxii. 9. [r] lxxi. 6. [s] ciii. 1, 2. [t] cxlvi. 2. [u] [Acts xvii. 28; 1 Tim. vi. 17.]

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them back unto thee pure and undefiled, full of wisdom and spiritual understanding, full of love and devout affection to thee, full of all good works and the fruits of righteousness, to *which thou hast created me again by Christ Jesus, that I should walk in them*[u].

Blessed be thy name, who hast sent him to give me a new and better life. I thank thee for all the helps and comforts of his religion. O that my heart may be possessed with such a strong belief of it, and such a sincere love to it, that I may feel indeed that I am born again, and made a new creature: meditating daily of thy mercies, breathing forth my soul to thee in prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings; walking in the spirit of *goodness, righteousness and truth; and proving what is acceptable to our Lord*[x].

All the thanks and services, I acknowledge, that I am able to render to thee, are nothing worth; but the longer I live, I most earnestly desire the more hearty and the purer they may be, and the more I may be enabled to do for thy honour and glory. If thou sufferest me to continue in this life another year, O that in the conclusion of it I may present myself unto thee again more improved in all that is praiseworthy. The time past is too much to have misspent. O that I may suffer no more of my precious hours to run waste, but that they may all be taken up, and carefully laid out in welldoing.

Help me diligently to husband so great a treasure, which thou entrustest me withal, and to employ it in order to a blessed eternity. Let not *the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke those good seeds* which thou hast sown in my heart, so that *they become unfruitful*[y]: but enable me as I grow in years to increase also in *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, faith, meekness, temperance*[z], and all other fruits of thy Holy Spirit.

And since I have been thy care so long, *I will* still *hope* in thee *continually*, that I shall *yet praise thee more and more*[a]. Cast *me not off* if I live to the *time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works*[b].

[u] Ephes. ii. 10. [x] v. 9, 10. [y] Mark iv. 19. [z] Gal. v. 22, 23.
[a] Psal. lxxi. 14. [b] lxxi. 9, 17.

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Hold me up still, *and I shall be safe. Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me*[c]. That so *if the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when I shall say, I have no pleasure in them*[d], I may rejoice in the remembrance of a well-spent life, and having a good hope in thee, *the day of my death may be better than the day of my birth*[e].

O that death may never surprise me, nor find me unprepared. Help me to walk alway so circumspectly, and to be so mindful of my latter end, that when death comes it may be no stranger to me; but I may entertain it as an acquaintance and a friend, and with the same cheerfulness put off my body, and lay it down in the grave, that I put off my clothes and lay myself down in my bed. I commit myself entirely to thee, both now and ever, waiting for thy mercy in Christ Jesus, at that great day when thou shalt awake us out of the dust. O that I may then be numbered among the just, and stand at the right hand of my Saviour, and hear that joyful voice, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*[f]*!* Amen.

[c] Psal. cxix. 117, 133. [d] Eccles. xii. 1. [e] vii. 1.
[f] Matt. xxv. 34.

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THAT we may be *steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, here follow particular prayers for that grace; and in case of any failing in our duty, for repentance, and pardon, and for an heart truly sensible of the divine goodness, and more considerate and careful for the time to come.

A PRAYER

FOR RESOLUTION IN WELL-DOING.

O MOST blessed God, the fountain of wisdom, power, strength, and all other perfections; from whose bounty I have formerly received and at present enjoy innumerable blessings, and have no hope for the future but what arises from the same everlasting spring of all good, which is never weary of deriving its benefits unto us: I ought in a sense of my entire dependence upon thee to be very humble, very thankful, exceeding solicitous for thy favour, and desirous of thy goodwill; sorrowful for my neglects of thee, ashamed of the pitiful returns I have made to thee, and most peremptorily resolved and zealously bent to approve myself hereafter to thy divine Majesty in all well-doing.

Accordingly I am now prostrate before thee, to implore the continued powerful presence of that infinite grace, to which I owe these holy thoughts that are in my mind, and by which alone I can hope to perform and accomplish them. Possess me, O God, with such a full and lively sense of thy undeserved and unwearied love and kindness to me, in passing by so much ingratitude, and so many transgressions; in laying on me such strong and manifold obligations to be happy by obeying thee, and in affording me such powerful assistances to attain that happiness; that I may love thee proportionably with a more constant and steadfast affection, and feel an unalterable will

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settled in me to do the duty thou requirest of me, into whatsoever state and condition of life thou shalt be pleased to dispose me.

When we have loved thee all that we can, I am sensible we have loved thee but a little, because we and all that we can do are so inconsiderable. How small a thing then is it, how poor and contemptible, that we return unto thee, when we love thee not so much as we are able! O blessed God, cause such a delightful sense of thy goodness to fall upon my heart, and to abide with me, that all the powers of my soul may strain themselves to love thee, and unite themselves unto thee, in an unalterable choice of thy will, to be the sole governor of all my designs, and desires, and actions throughout the whole course of my life. I love myself most, I see, when I love thee entirely; and serve myself by doing thee all faithful service. In union with thee I am at rest and peace; and in constant adherence to thee consists my eternal safety and security.

To thee therefore, with the deliberate and full consent of my will, I devote myself, resolving to love and serve thee with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. I vow unto thee, as I have done often, all sincere obedience; and protest against every thing that is contrary to thy holy commands, as contrary also to my own sense and judgment, to my most sober and serious thoughts, and to my most advised counsels and resolutions. They all acknowledge how just and reasonable, how good and pleasant, how profitable and beneficial, how honourable and glorious it is to be a doer of thy will, which, besides the present contentment and satisfaction of it, hath a great recompense of reward.

O preserve in my mind a constant remembrance how dearly I am bought by the precious blood of thy Son Christ; how early I was dedicated to thy service, how often I have since found abundant cause to determine I would be thine, how I have condemned myself for the breach of those holy purposes, and what great satisfaction of mind I have had in the keeping of thy commandments; that so I may never wilfully offend against so many forcible reasons obliging me to my duty, but be swayed by them, notwithstanding all the temptations of the world, the flesh or the devil, to persevere in a resolved obedience to thee for ever.

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And by the power of thy Holy Spirit I beseech thee to make them clearer, stronger, and more effectual; that I may have the same thoughts, passions, inclinations, and purposes now, which I shall be apt to have when I come to die. For which end, help me often to place myself before thy judgment-seat, and to consider that I must give an account for all that I have received: for thy holy gospel; for thy divine inspirations; for the counsels and exhortations of thy ministers; for all the means and helps of growing better; and for all the encouragements I have even from the good things of this life which thy bounty bestows upon me: that by a careful preparation for such a reckoning, I may be kept close and steadfast to my duty, in hope of that exceeding glorious reward, which our Lord will bestow upon all his faithful servants at the day of his appearing. Amen.

Another to the same effect.

O most great and glorious Majesty of heaven and earth, who art of unspotted purity, and in whom there is not the least shadow of change; I know that all the resolutions of thy wisdom are most just and equal; and I cannot choose, when I am in my right mind, to be guided by anything else but thy holy will: who designest, I see, in all the revelations thou hast made of thyself to us, to make us like to thy own most blessed nature. I do here own and acknowledge most heartily the righteousness and goodness of all thy laws; I admire the loveliness of thy image in wisdom, righteousness, and true holiness; I loathe my own deformity whilst I am unlike to thee. I implore thy renewing grace, as the greatest blessing I can receive from thee; and I bind myself to the faithful improvement of it as the weightiest employment of my life.

I am abundantly satisfied in the declaration thou hast made of thy gracious purposes towards us. I renounce all thoughts and desires that are contrary thereunto, and resolve that holiness and eternal life shall be my design and study. I expect no pardon, O my God, but in ways of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. I hope for a blessed immortality only by patient continuance in well-doing. I consent to every part of thy holy gospel, and add my testimony to the truth of its words, that

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none of thy commandments are grievous[a]; but *thy yoke is easy, and thy burden light*[b]. I hope, O Lord, by thy grace, I shall never contradict myself by disowning in my practice these free and serious professions; but that I shall every day so call to mind my own protestations and resolutions as to continue with an unwearied diligence in steadfast obedience to thy commands, and to grow still stronger in the grace of the Lord Jesus.

O that every such address as this unto thy Divine Majesty may leave a greater sense of thee, and of my duty, and of my happiness, and of my manifold obligations and repeated promises, upon my heart! that I may always go out of thy presence with my mind more towards heaven; with lower thoughts of all the enjoyments of this life; with a greater relish of piety and holiness; and more passionate desires to become every way such as thou canst approve and love and delight in for ever! And assist me, I humbly beseech thee, so constantly from above, that whatsoever good thoughts are at any time in my mind, they may grow to fixed principles; and all heavenly affections may become a new nature, and the constant temper of my spirit; and all my purposes and resolutions may advance into a serious practice and exercise of godliness; and all the actions of an holy life may grow more free, cheerful, vigorous, and full of delight, till they be completed in everlasting bliss, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

A PRAYER

AFTER RELAPSE INTO ANY SIN.

I CAST down myself before thee, O most holy Lord of heaven and earth, with an humble, sorrowful, and penitent heart, adoring thy infinite grace, which suffers such a vile and miserable sinner to approach into thy presence. I am thine indeed, dedicated long ago to thy service, which I have since chosen as the most perfect freedom; but so much the greater reason I have to be abashed before thee, and to be astonished at thy forbearing mercy, which prolongs the life of such an one as I

[a] [1 John v. 3.] [b] [Matt. xi. 30.]

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am, who have been so false to thee and to my own resolutions. I remember, in the bitterness of my soul, how many obligations thou hast laid upon me to observe and obey thee; how often I have acknowledged the justice and goodness of thy precepts, and how frequently I have promised and vowed to conform myself unto them; and what great and precious promises thou hast made to me of invaluable blessings: and yet, wretch that I am, I have been drawn aside from thy ways by easy and slight temptations, and for a small and momentary pleasure or gain[a] have ventured the loss of thy favour, which is better than life itself.

O God, that thou shouldest have patience with so perfidious, so ungrateful, so senseless a creature as I am! that thou shouldest permit me to see the light of the sun, and hast not condemned me to utter darkness, in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! but that thou givest me leave to look towards heaven, and that I have an heart to speak unto thee, and still may call thee Father, saying, *Father, I have sinned against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*[b]! O the riches, O the unsearchable riches of thy grace! I can never sufficiently admire thy exceeding great longsuffering towards me in Christ Jesus; nor sufficiently abhor and loathe myself for my foul revolt from thee, who art so kind and gracious; especially if I should still continue to abuse such tender mercy and compassion towards me. Tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, I acknowledge, is the due portion of those that do evil; and if thou shouldest abandon me, and cast me out of thy sight, I must confess that thou art righteous, and that I reap but the fruit of my own ways, and suffer the deserved punishment of my late iniquity.

But thou, O God, delightest in mercy, and *there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*[c]. Thou hast sworn that thou *desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should return and live*[d]; and hast sent thy Son Jesus, with the most endearing arguments of the greatest love, to persuade us to return unto our duty. Behold, O Lord, I return with grief and affliction of spirit that I have offended thee, detesting the thoughts of doing the like again, and resolving to be more

[a] Here mention the particular sin. [b] [Luke xv. 19, 21.]
[c] Ps. cxxx. 4. [d] Ezek. xviii. 32.

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careful and diligent and circumspect for the time to come. O let me live to the praise of thy omnipotent grace, enabling me to perform these resolutions in a more strict and exact obedience to thy holy commands the rest of my days.

Mercy, mercy, I most earnestly beg, O Father of mercies, for the sake of him that died for me; not merely for the pardon of my sins, but for a divine power to enable me to subdue them. I desire not thy infinite goodness to bear me out in rebellion against thy righteousness, purity, and truth; but that by thy goodness I may be partaker of them; that my repentance may be accepted; and that it may be hearty and steadfast, never to be repented of. I desire no peace, quiet, and ease in my heart, but in a constant and resolute opposition of all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and in the hope I have that through thy gracious assistance it shall be victorious.

O settle me, I beseech thee, in this holy disposition, that I may preserve an entire friendship with thee hereafter by an happy agreement with thy will and pleasure in everything: and for that end make me *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*[d]; that being sensible of my own great weakness, I may more earnestly depend upon thy aid from above, by an humble and vigorous faith in thy almighty goodness. Maintain such a clear light in my mind that may keep me from being deceived with the vain shadows and empty appearances of satisfactory pleasure in anything of this world. Fortify my will with the power of thy divine love, that may overcome all sensual affections that arise in me at any time against thy sacred commands; and possess me with such a lively hope of those good things which Christ hath promised in the other life, that may make me active and zealous, steadfast and unmovable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*[e].

Thou knowest the secrets of all hearts; let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon me, according as I deliberately and sincerely choose to *cleave unto thee with purpose of heart*[f]. *O cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me:* but *hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and*

[d] Ephes. vi. 10. [e] [1 Cor. xv. 58.] [f] Acts xi. 23.

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renew a constant spirit in me[f]. *Make my heart to be sound in thy statutes, that I may never be ashamed*[g]. *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. The words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart shall be accepted in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer*[h]. Amen, Amen.

A THANKSGIVING TO THE DIVINE GOODNESS

FOR ANY HOPE OF A PARDON

AFTER SUCH RELAPSE.

O eternally most blessed God, the fountain of all good; from whence all creatures derive whatsoever they enjoy. They are all poor and indigent things, full of necessities and wants, which are continually supplied out of thy fulness; but the wants of our souls are the most lamentable; because, besides the poverty of creatures, we have made a great many needs to ourselves by our wilful departure from thee, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. We stand in need of thy pardon, of thy converting grace, and the greater supplies of thy Holy Spirit; which we know not how with any confidence to expect; but that all these wants are not too big for thy infinite goodness to relieve, and that thou hast been pleased most compassionately to consider our miserable condition, in sending Christ Jesus into the world, and filling him with all the treasures of thy grace and mercy, that he might dispense them to us according to our several necessities.

O how excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! how surpassing is thy love! that will pass by the insolent offences of thy creatures against thy high authority and sovereign goodness; and not let them eternally perish without a remedy, in that forlorn condition into which they have brought themselves. Blessed, for ever blessed be thy sparing mercy, which hath *delivered Christ Jesus for our offences;* and testified thy accept-

[f] Ps. li. 9, 10, 11. [g] cxix. 80. [h] xix. 13, 14.

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ance of his sacrifice of himself, by *raising him again for our justification*[i]. Blessed be thy name for the gracious declaration which thou hast made, that *if any man sin, we have an Advocate with thee, Christ Jesus the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins*[j]. I most thankfully receive these glad tidings, *which are worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*[k]. Thanks be to thy tender mercy, which hath restored us to a possibility of recovering thy grace and favour: the smallest hope of it, I acknowledge, is more valuable than the greatest abundance of all the enjoyments and pleasures of this present life.

What praise therefore, what love, what obedience am I bound to render unto thee, who hast given me such a good hope of peace and reconciliation with thee; and thereby delivered me from the horror of my own guilty mind, remembering that I have adventured to oppose my will to thine! I ought for ever with the most zealous devotion of a grateful and obedient heart, to admire and stand amazed at thy inconceivable grace, which will not strictly *mark what is done amiss*[l]; but accept of our repentance and amendment, instead of an entire and constant performance of our duty to thee. *O the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of thy love in Christ Jesus!* which is the satisfaction of our heart, and the joy of our lives; which would otherwise be intolerably grievous and burdensome to us, whilst we remember that we are sinners.

Fill me, O Lord, with a most ardent love to thee, now that I here offer up myself, in truth and sincerity of heart, to be wholly disposed by thee. Behold, O Lord, my will lies at thy feet: I would have no will of my own, but desire only that thy will may be done. And fill me with an holy fear of thee, that thy indulgent mercy may not make me remiss, and negligent, and presumptuous again to offend thee; but a perpetual sense of my new obligations to thee in reviving my hopes, which I had forfeited, in thee, may render me more watchful, more diligent, more earnest and solicitous, more humble and distrustful of myself, and more fervent to implore the powerful succours of thy divine grace.

[i] [Rom. iv. 25.] [j] 1 John ii. 1, 2. [k] 1 Tim. i. 15.
[l] [Ps. cxxx. 3. Ephes. iii. 18.]

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O that it may be as natural to me to pray to thee as it is to breathe; and thou, *who fillest the hungry with good things*[u], pour into me life, and strength, and vigour, in a constant dependence on thee, and hearty endeavour to do thy will. *Strengthen me with might by thy Spirit in the inner man*[x]: that notwithstanding the strongest temptations wherewith I may be assaulted, and notwithstanding the weakness and feebleness of my own spirit to resist them, I may persevere courageously in well-doing unto the end; and finish my course with joy, and lay myself down to rest in an holy hope that I shall enter into a state of safety and security from all danger, and remain for ever in the joy of our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for the divine grace.

O most blessed God, the high and mighty One, who inhabitest eternity, and art what thou always wast, and ever wilt be, the most perfect power, wisdom, goodness and truth; the fountain of all the perfections that are in us: we ought to address ourselves to thee in the greatest humility of spirit; having nothing to present thee withal which we can call our own; and being unable by all our righteousness to profit thee, who standest in need of none of thy creatures. But alas! O Lord, we have robbed thee of that which we have received from thee; and are so far from giving thee any thing of ours, that we have not returned to thee that which is thine.

O the miserable condition therefore into which we have brought ourselves! who are not so much as fit to receive any more from thy divine bounty; and, which is worse, have been too unwilling to partake of thy favours! O thy infinite love in Christ Jesus, which hath bestowed the richest grace upon us, whether we would or no! Thou hast honoured our nature with thy divine presence dwelling in it: thou hast delivered him to die for our sins: thou hast given us a blessed hope in thee, by his resurrection from the dead: thou hast *sent him to bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities*[y]; and given him all power in heaven and earth; that he may succour and strengthen us when we are tempted, and enable us to overcome.

[u] [Luke i. 53.] [x] Ephes. iii. 16. [y] Acts iii. 26.

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I thank thee with all my soul for this abundant grace, so freely and undesired conferred upon us: which encourages me to hope in thee, now that thou inclinest my heart towards thee, and hast given me a thankful sense of thy love, and some will to obey thee, and holy resolutions to cleave unto thee in well-doing; that thou wilt not deny me the constant assistance of that good Spirit which our Saviour hath bid us ask of thee, to strengthen, confirm and settle what thou hast begun to do for me, in a perfect love and steadfast obedience to all thy holy commands.

O God of all grace and might, the root of our life, and power and strength; without whom all good desires and purposes wither and die; withdraw not the sweet influences of thy Holy Spirit from thy unworthy servant, who entirely confides in thee, and hath no hope but in thy infinite mercies. Remember not against me former iniquities; let not my late backsliding and return to folly cut me off from the communication of thy grace; which is wont to press into those souls that open themselves to receive it, and seriously thirst after it. My soul thirsteth for thee, O God; that I may be more firmly united to thee, and be made more exactly like thee, in unchangeable righteousness, purity and goodness.

Cherish and increase the most faint but sincere motions which thou seest in me towards a more complete participation of thee. And especially preserve in me a full confidence in thy almighty love, as ready to accomplish the desires and endeavours of all those who yield up themselves unto it, in hearty willingness to be governed by it. That, being borne up by this strong hope in thee my helper and exceeding great reward, no temptation may be able to prevail over me; but I may walk steadfastly and evenly with thee, in all conditions and circumstances of life. Make me feel so much of the comfort of this faith, and love, and hope, and obedience, reviving me to a delightful sense of a blessed immortality; that whatsoever allurements or discouragements I meet withal in this world, they may only provoke me to give a greater proof of all these in a constant adherence to my duty; and occasion the increase of my unspeakable joy and satisfaction.

And enlarge my heart thereby to such a measure of Christian piety, that I may not only be innocent and harmless, but

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forward also to do us good; and not only contented with my portion, but rejoice in our Lord alway: and rejoice not only to do thy will, but to suffer also for righteousness' sake, knowing that great shall be my reward in heaven. Bless my endeavours to *add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: that, doing these things, I may never fall; but an entrance may be ministered to me abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*[z]. Amen.

A short prayer when any man's occasions call him to a place where he feels danger.

O Almighty God, who art every where, and more especially present to those souls that look up unto thee, with an high esteem of thy favour and grace, and with hearty desires to continue in thy love by patient continuance in well-doing: in this humble faith in thy divine goodness, and with a due fear and reverence of thy glorious Majesty, I prostrate my soul and body before thee; to put myself into thy most gracious protection, and to beg the powerful assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to preserve me, wheresoever I am, in a dutiful observance of all thy holy commands.

I am sensible, O Lord, that we live in a world of temptations, and that our nature is weak, and ready to yield to them; and that our affections are apt to wander after vanity, and that sudden passions oftentimes transport us from our duty. But I know withal, that a sense of thy all-seeing eye, and of the life to come, and of the rewards and punishments which thou wilt render according to our works; will certainly over-awe all sinful motions in me, and break the force of the strongest temptations that assault me. And therefore, the greater the danger is, the more earnestly I sue unto thee to be possessed with a piercing sense and lively remembrance of the sethings, which may abide with me alway, and especially this day, in every place and company into which I shall come.

[z] 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 10, 11.

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O that I may not so be forgetful of thee, and of my own good, as for the small and momentany pleasure of this world, to hazard the loss of those great and eternal joys which we expect in the other life. But enable me, O most gracious God, so to behave myself, that when I have passed through all the employments and occasions of this day, I may bring myself back again into thy presence so pure and undefiled, that I may begin those joys that are to come in cheerful praises of thee, and in a comfortable sense that thou dwellest in me, and art leading me by thy Holy Spirit to immortal happiness, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

A prayer for serious and effectual consideration, the better to establish all good resolutions.

O most glorious Majesty of heaven and earth, who art above the highest of all our thoughts, and much more beyond all our words: (but that thou art great and mighty we know by thy works of wonder which we behold; and the admirable disposure and government of all things tell us that thou art infinitely wise and knowest all things:) we see how good thou art by the large provision which thou hast made for all thy creatures everywhere. Thy precepts teach us how just and holy thou art; and by thy promises we know that thou art gracious and bountiful; and by thy threatenings that thou hatest iniquity; and by thy executing of both that thou art faithful and true, and wilt save the godly and punish evil-doers.

When we consider all this, we may justly wonder at ourselves that we should not fear thee, and reverence thee, and love thee, and seek thy love and favour above all things, by studying to please thee in universal obedience to thy blessed will, which designs to employ thy almighty power to make us so great, so happy, and so glorious. And there is no other reason, I see, why we are no better affected towards thee, but because our thoughts are exceeding short, and light, and vain, and we so seldom consider and deeply ponder what we confess thou art, and in what relation we stand to thy divine Majesty.

Vouchsafe therefore, O God of all grace, to awaken my mind to a more lively and steadfast remembrance of thee, my Creator, my Redeemer, my daily Benefactor, and my most loving and tender-hearted Father in Christ Jesus. O that no

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day may pass without some serious and considerate thoughts of those things which so nearly concern my everlasting welfare: and by thy powerful presence with me, enlighten my mind to a clearer sense of them. Quicken and enliven that sense, I humbly beseech thee, and make it so strong and moving, that it may press upon my heart and affections till it overcome me to surrender soul and body absolutely unto thee.

Pardon all my former neglects of thee, and let them not hinder the influences of thy Holy Spirit upon me, by which I may be changed into thy image and likeness. Sanctify my understanding, that I may rightly conceive thy holy truths, and fully apprehend them. Sanctify my memory, that I may keep in mind all that I know of thee, and of thy blessed will revealed to us in Christ Jesus. Sanctify my will, that I may cheerfully embrace and entirely consent to thine in all things. And sanctify all my affections, that I may love thee with all my heart, and soul, and strength, and delight in thee more than in all the contentments of this life; and hope more for thy glory than all worldly preferments; and fear thee more than the greatest potentate upon earth; and take more care for my soul and eternal things than for this body and all its momentany pleasures; and hate all sin more than my greatest enemies. Yea, help me to love mine enemies; to do good to them that do evil to me; to bless them that curse me, and pray for them that despitefully use me.

For which end sanctify all my passions, that I may be angry at nothing so much as that I have displeased thee; and in an holy indignation at myself, and in revenge of my former negligence and disobedience, may be more strict and severe in the performance of all my duty for the time to come. Sanctify me throughout in body as well as spirit, that I may possess it in holiness and honour; and all my senses may administer occasions to my mind to remember thee, to praise thee, and to bless thee, who every way so liberally providest for me. Sanctify all my conversation with others, and all the employments of this life, that I may still be heavenly-minded, and have a respect to my last end and everlasting good. Sanctify all the blessings of health, and strength, and peace, and plenty, and friends; yea, and all the crosses and afflictions of this life, that they may make me more serious and considerate, and help

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more perfectly to purify my spirit, and dispose me for the happiness of the other world.

Raise me, O Lord, to such an exceeding great delight in these holy thoughts and meditations; and entertain me with such a blissful sense of thee, when I address myself unto thee, that I may rather be unwilling to depart from thy presence than weary of conversing with thee. And when I return to my other employments again, O that my mind may be often looking back towards thee, my God, my exceeding joy; desirous to be always with thee, and longing to enjoy thee in unchangeable love and perfect likeness to thee: unto which I most humbly beseech thee to bring me, for thy mercies' sake declared in Christ Jesus, who lives for ever to make intercession for us. Amen.

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The better to preserve a constant sense of God in the mind, and pious dispositions in the heart, here follow certain short Ejaculations (as we are wont to call them) in which, upon several occasions, any man may lift up his soul to God; and if he do it fervently, may find it of great effect.

EJACULATIONS.

When he awakes in the morning he may say,

I laid me down and slept: I awaked, for the Lord sustained me[a].

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee[b].

When he is dressing himself.

O how beautiful is the ornament of a pure, humble, meek, patient, and charitable spirit! Help me, O God, to *put on the Lord Jesus*[c] in these and all other virtues.

When he goes into the church or his closet.

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise[d].

When he begins any business.

My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth[e].

The Lord Jesus Christ be with my spirit[f].

When he goes forth of his doors.

Hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not[g].

[a] Ps. iii. 5. [b] cxxxix. 17, 18. [c] [Rom. xiii. 14.] [d] Ps. lvii. 7.
[e] cxxi. 2. [f] 2 Tim. iv. 22. [g] Ps. xvii. 5.

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Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me[g]. *Give thy angels charge over me, to keep me in all my ways*[h].

When he walks abroad and beholds all things round about him, he may say, as it is Ps. civ. 24,

O Lord how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches, &c.

At meals.

O taste and see that the Lord is good. He filleth our hearts with food and gladness[i].

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits[j].

At candlelight.

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us[k]:

or,

God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us[l].

When he goes to bed.

I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety[m].

He that keepeth me doth not slumber. The Lord is my keeper: the Lord is my defence, who neither slumbers nor sleeps[n].

In the night-season.

O happy souls that *rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, which is, and is to come*[o]*!*

O great God! the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee[p].

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice[q].

[g] Ps. cxix. 133. [h] xci. 11. [i] Ps. xxxiv. 8. Acts xiv. 17. [j] Ps. lxviii. 19. [k] iv. 6. [l] lxvii. 1. [m] iv. 8. [n] cxxi. 4, 5. [o] Rev. iv. 8. [p] Ps. cxxxix. 12. [q] lxiii. 5–7.

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On a sick bed, or in other affliction.

It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good[r].

It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord[s].

Blessed be the Lord for my long-continued health, and all his other benefits. Let the remembrance of thy former mercies refresh my soul, and encourage my hope, and strengthen my patience with quiet resignation of myself to thy good pleasure.

At the point of death.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord[t].

Into thy hand, O Father, I commend myself, who breathedst into me the breath of life. *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*[u], which thou hast redeemed by thy precious blood, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

When he hears a passing-bell.

Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity[v].

O teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom[x].

In a time of plague.

O Lord, correct us, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring us to nothing[y].

In a time of war.

"O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thy name's sake."

"From our enemies defend us, O Christ. Graciously look upon our afflictions."

King Asa cried unto God in this manner when he was going to give battle to a million of enemies.

Lord, it is nothing with thee to help whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name go against this multitude[z].

[r] 1 Sam. iii. 18. [s] Lam. iii. 26. [t] Gen. xlix. 18. [u] [Acts vii. 59.] [v] Ps. xxxix. 5. [x] Ps. xc. 12. [y] Jer. x. 24. [z] 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

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In any other public calamity.

Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach[a].

A great offender may often say with the prodigal,

Father, I have sinned against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son[b].

And with the publican,

God be merciful to me a sinner[c].

After any mercy received.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me[d]*?*

Every day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever[e].

I shall mention no more, because I would not invite the reader to make this sort of prayer too common: for by that means it will be in danger to grow cold, and lose its force and efficacy by growing fashionable. To that purpose I remember a devout prelate of our own (bishop Hall) somewhere delivers his judgment about this matter. But if any one find that he can with profit turn his thoughts this way, upon all occasions, he may easily invent more ejaculations. "The measure of them is" (as that forenamed person speaks) "to preserve our hearts in a constant, tender, and godly disposition; which shall be further actuated upon all opportunities by the exercise of our more enlarged and fixed devotions."

A prayer for submission to God in case of any great loss in a man's estate, relations, or friends.

O most holy, holy, holy, the supreme Lord and Governor of the world; who art unsearchable in thy wisdom, unspotted in thy justice, and irresistible in thy power; whose goodness hath no bounds but what thy wise and holy will gives unto it; and art immutable in these and all other perfections, the great God most blessed for ever! It is most reasonable and agreeable to our nature, most profitable and convenient to our interest, most

[a] Joel ii. 17. [b] [Luke xv. 18, 21.] [c] [Luke xviii. 14.]
[d] Ps. cxvi. 12. [e] cxlv. 2.

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satisfactory and suitable to our wisest choice, by an absolute and quiet submission in all things to thy sovereign wisdom, justice, and goodness, to declare our fear and reverence of thee; our unfeigned love to thee, and desires to please thee; our trust and confidence in thee, and ready disposition to obey thee.

Thou art too great, I know, to delight in grieving us thy poor creatures, and hast other ways of procuring thy own pleasure than by our misery, pain, and torment: and therefore, in a full persuasion of thy unerring providence over us, and infinite charity towards us, I here most humbly and freely resign all my thoughts and desires unto thee; submitting myself entirely to thy orders, and resolving by thy gracious assistance to rest contented with whatsoever thou appointest. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*[d]. Blessed be thy name, who hast continued to me so long the enjoyment of so many good things: blessed be thy name, that I had anything to part withal, whereby I may testify my faith in thee and affection to thee: blessed be thy name, that I have any of the comforts of this life still remaining, and that they are not all taken away from me. I have nothing too great or too dear to be resigned to thee; from whose bounty I received all I have, and who art my best and my eternal friend.

O that no repining thoughts may arise in my heart, to disorder and discompose my duty towards thee, or towards my neighbour! but help me rather to think wherein I have offended thee, and carefully to amend it; to place my affections more steadfastly on those unmovable things which are above; to lay up my treasure and hope in heaven; and to prepare myself by perfecting my purity, and thankfulness, and patience, and all other virtues, to be translated thither, where our life is hid in thee with Christ Jesus.

I thank thee, O Father of mercies, that thou hast given us such everlasting consolation through thy grace in him. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever, for those exceeding great and precious promises which thou hast given us, to support and comfort us in all the troubles of this life. Increase my faith, strengthen and confirm my hope, lift up my spirit continually to that blessed place where

[d] Job i. 21.

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Jesus is, that I may rejoice in hope of that immortal life, when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and there shall be no sighing nor sorrow any more; but we [who are now parted asunder[e]] shall meet together to acknowledge with eternal praises thy wise and merciful providence, which, by ways most contrary to our desires, hath brought us to endless and undisturbed bliss.

Thou knowest, O Lord, the weakness and frailty of our nature; and therefore vouchsafe me the constant assistance of thy good Spirit (for which I depend upon thee), to enable me to continue in this humble, quiet, and dutiful submission to thee, waiting for that peaceable and joyful repose in the eternal rest which thou hast prepared for thy people through thy mercies in Christ Jesus; by whom all glory, honour, love, and obedience be rendered to thee, by me and all mankind, both now and for ever. Amen.

A prayer which a pious soul may use that is full of doubts and much troubled in mind.

O Lord, *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*[f]; I acknowledge and adore thy eternal power, wisdom, and goodness; I render thee my most hearty thanks for all the benefits thou hast freely bestowed on me from my first coming into the world until this time. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered*[g]. Above all, I bless thee for that great demonstration of thy love and good-will to mankind in Christ Jesus, whom thou hast sent into the world to save sinners; and for bringing me to the clear knowledge of him, faith in him, and some love, I hope, towards him, and unfeigned affection to thy holy will declared to us in his blessed gospel.

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth up, and hitherto been marvellously gracious to me. Hide not, I beseech thee, thy face now from me, and put not thy servant away in displeasure. Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation: but for Jesus Christ his sake

[e] This clause to be used only in the loss of friends or relations.

[f] 2 Cor. i. 3. [g] Ps. xl. 5.

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I humbly entreat thee to pardon and pass by all my neglects of thee, and unthankfulness to thee, and offences against thee. And as I here sincerely devote and dedicate my whole self, soul and body, to thy service; so help me, O my God, and further me in the performance of my duty by the grace of thy Holy Spirit. To thee all hearts are open, and from thee no secrets are hid; deal with me according to the earnest desire and full purpose of my soul to conform myself in all things to thy holy will.

Settle in me an unmovable faith in thy infinite mercies, a constant love and cheerful affection to my duty, and a readiness of heart to obey thee, and to submit to thy wise appointments in every condition. The whole earth is full of thy mercy; *thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing*[e]: O refuse not the humble desires of my poor soul, which gaspeth after thee, even as the thirsty land. Thou who givest to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens when they cry, O satisfy me early with thy mercies, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days. Compose my broken and disturbed thoughts, quiet my troubled and disordered spirit, and appease all the ragings and tumults there by a sweet sense of thy most tender mercies, which have been ever of old, and endure continually.

Banish from me all causeless fears and jealousies; deliver me from all unprofitable sadness and dejections of spirit; keep me from rash judging of myself, and much more from charging thee foolishly; bestow upon me a cheerful spirit, by an humble hope in thee, and by referring myself wholly to thee; endue me with such wisdom and uprightness, that I may neither neglect my duty, nor suspect thy gracious acceptance of me; give me an hearty zeal to do the best that I am able, and a settled persuasion that thou requirest no more of me.

Defend me, O my gracious God, from dishonouring thee and my religion, by distrusting thy goodness and calling thy loving-kindness in question towards those that are sincerely bent to please thee. Remove all troublesome imaginations from me, and give me a clear understanding of thee and of myself: or when I am in darkness and confusion of thoughts, grant me so much light and judgment as not to conclude myself forsaken

[e] [Ps. cxlv. 16.]

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by thee, but to reflect upon thy long-continued favours to me, and many deliverances of me; that so I may resolve still to hope in thee, to bear my present trouble patiently, and to resign my will absolutely to thy good pleasure. And, good Lord, enable me to look beyond these clouds to that blessed state whither my Saviour is gone, in which there is no darkness at all; and, in an humble hope of coming to the same place where he is, to content myself with any condition whilst I am here, so far remote from that region of light and glory.

Hear me, most loving and merciful Father, I most humbly beseech thee; pity my great dulness and deadness of heart; strengthen my weak and feeble endeavours; support my fainting spirit, and cause it humbly to hope in thee for ever; confirm and establish every good thought, desire, and purpose which thou hast wrought in me; perfect that which thou hast begun; make me to grow in wisdom, faith, love, and willing obedience; conduct me hereafter so evenly and steadily, so peaceably and quietly, so cheerfully and securely in thy ways, that I may glorify thee whilst I live by encouraging others to accompany me in thy service, and when I come to die, may resign my soul unto thee with an undisturbed mind, in an holy hope also of a joyful resurrection of the body at the great day of the Lord Jesus; to whom be glory and dominion for ever. Amen.

A prayer to be said by others for one that is troubled in mind.

O God, the only hope, the refuge, the comfort and satisfaction of our souls; of whose goodness and tender mercy all the world hath so many testimonies, and we ourselves have had such long experience, that we are encouraged thereby, though most unworthy, to make this humble address to thy Divine Majesty.

Thou seest, we know, and pitiest the misery and torment of this afflicted spirit; none of his[h] sighs or groanings are hid from thee; but to expose also our charity and compassionate concernment for him, we are bold to recommend him to thy favour, as a great object of the bowels of thy mercy which are in Christ Jesus.

[h] Or *her*.

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We ought indeed above all things to admire thy most wise goodness, which *hath set forth him to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*[i], and invited even the greatest sinners to return unto thee and live. Blessed, eternally blessed be thy great and glorious grace, which hath sent us such glad tidings of peace and reconciliation, and assured hope, that if we obediently believe thy holy gospel, *thou wilt be merciful to our sins, and remember our iniquities no more*[k]. O Father of mercies, who *openest the eyes of the blind, and raisest them that are bowed down*[l], open the eyes of this thy servant, that he may see thy marvellous love revealed in Christ Jesus. Touch his spirit with such a powerful sense of it, that he may both heartily and absolutely consent to be governed by thy laws, and likewise be revived with a comfortable belief of the truth of all thy precious promises.

Free him from all confusion of thoughts, and bestow on him a clear and distinct apprehension of all things belonging to his peace. And as thou hast wrought in him a fear of thy divine Majesty, and many holy desires after thee, and persuaded him, we hope, to be willing in all things to live godlily; so possess him with an humble belief that thou wilt always enable him to do accordingly; and never fail to strengthen him against all the power of the enemy, till he hath got the victory and triumphs in hope of thy salvation.

Raise up his spirit, most mighty Lord, by the power of a most strong faith in thine omnipotent goodness; which delights to cherish the least gaspings and pantings in us after true righteousness. Bear him up by this above all the clouds wherein he is encompassed, into a clear heaven of light and joy. Quiet and appease all his tumultuous passions, that he may silently listen to thy voice in thy holy Gospel, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*[m].

Thou who searchest the heart knowest that he unfeignedly submits himself to the yoke of thy laws. It is the present grief and affliction of his soul that he is no more perfectly subject to it. O refresh him with the belief that thou art more desirous than he that there should be a perfect reconciliation

[i] Rom. iii. 25. [k] Heb. viii. 12. [l] Ps. cxlvi. 8. [m] Matt. xi. 28.

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of his very nature and disposition to thee; and that therefore thou wilt not deny him the assistance of thy mighty grace to help him to fulfil thy whole good will and pleasure.

O that he may take courage from this hope to begin to do thy will; and continuing in well-doing, and growing more and more in strength and power to perform his duty, he may be delivered from all slavish fears and jealousies, and distrust of thy divine goodness. Especially keep him from despair of thy mercy, as the greatest dishonour to thee and to thy abundant grace in the Lord Jesus.

O thou who didst invite even those great sinners, *who by wicked hands took and crucified thy dear Son, to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins*[n]; lift up this dejected soul to an humble confidence in thee, that thou wilt not deny him the same mercy. And as thou hast sworn that thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his evil way and live; so be pleased, blessed God, to make him sensibly feel his soul is turning to thee; since he can find no comfort and satisfaction but only in thy love and favour, which he esteems better than life itself.

And that he may obtain thy pardon, help him *from his heart to forgive every one that hath trespassed against him*[o]. And if *he have taken any thing from any man wrongfully*, grant him grace to *restore it* to him[p]: *to give alms likewise of such things as he hath, and to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor*[q]; that thou, who art rich in mercy, mayest *be favourable unto him, and he may see thy face with joy*[r].

Hear us, good Lord, and give every one of us grace to walk exactly, and to keep pure consciences, void of offence towards thee, and towards all men; that so we may live and die in peace, looking for thy mercy in Christ Jesus unto eternal life. Amen.

Another for a person in the same condition.

O Lord, the Father of Spirits, the lover of our souls; who art pleased best in our love and hearty affection to thee, and

[n] Acts ii. 23, 38. [o] Matt. xviii. 35. [p] Luke xix. 8. [q] Luke xi. 41. Dan. iv. 27. [r] Job xxxiii. 26.

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wouldest have us delight ourselves in the thoughts of thee, and rejoice continually in thy holy name: give us leave to render our humble thanks to thy divine Majesty for this knowledge which thou hast given us of thy blessed nature; and in imitation of it to recommend with most fervent charity this desolate and afflicted soul to thy tender mercies. He is filled with trembling thoughts and frightful apprehensions of thee. The dread and terror of thy displeasure hath overwhelmed his spirit. *He is troubled, and bowed down greatly; he goeth mourning all the day long*[r]. O that thou wouldest be pleased so to represent thyself unto him that he may be possessed with the same sense which thou hast wrought in our minds; that *thou art love*, and desirest to be loved, and cheerfully served by all that worship thee.

Thou hast graciously wrought in him already a sense of his duty towards thee. Great sorrow overflows his soul for his neglects of thee, and offences against thee. And out of this depth he sighs and groans, and cries unto thee with earnest desires and purposes to live more holily for the time to come. Awaken his mind, good Lord, to very sensible and thankful reflections upon this grace, which thou hast begun to show him. Bless all the pious counsels and instructions which thou likewise vouchsafest unto him to the encouraging of his hope in thee, that thou, *who hast begun a good work in him, wilt perfect it even until the day of Jesus Christ*[s]. Remember him that as thy *majesty is, so is thy mercy*[t]: and that thy power delights to show itself in doing good unto thy creatures; especially to the humble, the thankful, and the willing persons who are ready to submit themselves to thy blessed will.

O that this divine faith may banish all those fears that drive him from thee; and that he may rather fear lest he should offend thy divine Majesty, by not confiding in those promises of mercy which thou hast made in thy holy Gospel to all returning sinners! O that all his thoughts and care hereafter may only be to make his purpose of pleasing thee in all things, serious, hearty and unfeigned; believing that thou wilt graciously accept such holy resolutions, and certainly further and succeed them as the effect of thine own inspirations!

[r] Psal. xxxviii. 6. [s] Phil. i. 6. [t] Ecclus. ii. 18.

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Suffer not his spirit to be oppressed under the sense of his great weakness, or discouraged though he fall short of his present holy desires, purpose and endeavours; but bear him up in a strong persuasion that by sincere, constant and unwearied diligence in well-doing, he shall at last obtain the victory; through the power of thy Holy Spirit assisting of him. Make him see how reasonable it is most gratefully to acknowledge thy infinite mercies, if after much pains, many conflicts and long patience, he may recover a state of friendship with thee, that so he may not spend his time in dejected complaints, nor ever faint in his mind, or despond in the Christian course; but still pursue the complete mastery over himself, in assured hope that thou wilt be with him, and never leave him or forsake him.

We bless thee for that instance of thy exceeding grace to the chiefest of sinners which thou gavest in thy holy apostle of us Gentiles: *who was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but for this cause obtained mercy, that in him Christ Jesus might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting* [u].

Above all, we bless thee for our Lord Jesus himself, whom thou sentest in our flesh, that he might save sinners. We bless thee for all the miraculous cures which he wrought on miserable creatures, whereby he demonstrated his great charity towards us; for the gracious proclamation he hath made of thy pardoning mercy; and for the universal invitation which he hath given to every one *that is athirst, to come and take the waters of life freely* [x].

We thank thee for his death upon the cross, that he might make a *propitiation for the sins of the whole world* [y]: for his great love in praying then for his bitterest enemies, that they might be forgiven: for his resurrection and exaltation at thy right hand, *to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins:* and that he hath given to his apostles the *ministry of reconciliation* [z]; and admitted us into a covenant of mercy and forgiveness, by baptism into his name; and hath left us the cup of blessing, which *is the new covenant*

[u] 1 Tim. i. 13, 16. [x] Rev. xxii. 17. [y] 1 John ii. 2. Luke xxiii. 34. Acts v. 31. [z] 2 Cor. v. 18.

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in his blood for the remission of sins[z]; and given power and authority to his ministers to absolve all those who heartily repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel. We thank thee, O Lord, for the assurance we have that he *lives for ever to make intercession for us, and is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to thee by him*[a]: and that he *is a merciful and faithful High-Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; being touched with a feeling of all our miseries*[b].

We cannot doubt, O blessed God, of thy gracious intentions and desires to pardon us and to make us better, when we seriously meditate on all these testimonies of thy divine love; and on that easy and gentle yoke which thou layest on us, to love thee with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; and on the promised assistance which we have hopes of from above, to inspire, enliven and strengthen us to all welldoing and patient suffering.

O that this languishing soul may likewise feel the comfortable influence of all these heavenly truths reviving and cheering his spirit into a good hope in thee; that thou wilt mercifully accept the oblation which he is willing to make of himself to thee, and also constantly enable him to offer himself with greater affection and more pure devotion to thy service. Scatter all the clouds that darken his mind, and lift up on him the light of thy countenance. *O give him the comfort of thy help again, and establish him with thy free Spirit*[c]. *Quicken him, O Lord, for thy name's sake; for thy righteousness' sake bring his soul out of trouble*[d]. *Put gladness into his heart, and revive him again; that he and we may rejoice in thee*[e]. Amen, Amen, O God of all grace: *fulfil in him all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord may be glorified in him, according to that grace which was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus*[f]: *to whom be glory and praise for ever and ever.* Amen.

[z] Matt. xxvi. 28. [a] Heb. vii. 25; ii. 17. [b] Heb. iv. 15. [c] Psal. li. 12. [d] Ps. cxliii. 11. [e] iv. 7; lxxxv. 6. [f] 2 Thess. i. 11. 1 Tim. i. 14.

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When sickness arrests any person, it is time for him presently, in the very beginning of it, *to search and try his ways;* sorrowfully to confess the sins of which he finds himself guilty, with a full purpose of amendment, to advise with his spiritual guide, and before his spirit be feeble and broken, to recommend himself heartily to our blessed Saviour, by receiving the communion of his body and blood; therein making a commemoration of his wonderful love, and devoting himself again to his service. And having *set his house in order* (as the prophet said to Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 1.) and settled his estate, to acknowledge God's great goodness to him hitherto, and to submit himself wholly to his good pleasure, in such manner as followeth.

A prayer in the beginning of a sickness.

O Lord, the Sovereign of the world, *who doest what thou pleasest in heaven and in earth*[g], and delightest most in acts of bounty, as all thy works everywhere declare, and art *full of compassion and mercy, longsuffering and very pitiful, and forgivest sins, and savest in time of affliction*[h]: I acknowledge myself, among the rest of thy creatures, to be most deeply indebted to thee: whose life thou hast prolonged to this time in much health and plenty and peace, together with the enjoyment of spiritual blessings in the Lord Jesus. I thank thee, and praise thee; all that is within me blesses thy holy Name: to whose wise and good providence I wholly refer myself for the time to come, placing my entire trust and confidence in thy almighty goodness, faithfulness and truth, which endures for ever.

I ought to receive with all thankfulness whatsoever comes from thy hand; and believe that to be good for me which thy infinite wisdom and kindness orders and allots for my portion. Accordingly I accept with all humble and dutiful affection this thy fatherly chastisement. I acknowledge thy care of me, and submit to what thou wilt be pleased to lay upon me. If thou thinkest good to exercise me with a longer sickness, and to let the present indisposition of my body proceed to a greater disorder, not my will, but thine, O heavenly Father, be done.

[g] Psalm cxxxv. 6. [h] Ecclus. ii. 11.

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I only wait on thee for the comfortable presence of thy Holy Spirit, to support my soul by faith, and hope, and patience, under all the pains I may endure. Lay no more upon me, O Father of mercies, than I shall be able to bear; and lay upon me what thou pleasest. Free me, for the present, from all murmuring and repining thoughts; and for the future, make the sickness and anguish of my body a blessed instrument to purge my spirit more perfectly from all pride and vanity, from all covetousness and worldly-mindedness, and from all inordinate love of any of the pleasures of this life.

I believe, O blessed Jesus, that thou livest for ever, who sufferedst and diedst for us; and that thou hast a great compassion towards those who would gladly follow thee, though it be through sufferings. Behold, O Lord, I commend myself to thy mighty love, desiring above all things to be made conformable to thee in meekness, in humility, in patience, in entire resignation to God's holy will and pleasure, and in perfect satisfaction in his fatherly love and kindness, whatsoever my condition be.

I am sensible, O God, that I have not employed my time to the utmost advantage of my soul, and to thy honour and glory; but have wasted many precious hours, and several ways neglected my duty towards thee[i], and been but an unprofitable part of this world, so that I am not worthy to continue any longer in it. But I hope thou wilt vouchsafe me thy gracious pardon, and receive me to mercy, if thou callest me hence (for into thy hands, O Father, I commend my spirit, who hast redeemed me by the precious blood of Jesus Christ). And that if thou prolongest my days on earth, I shall serve thee with greater diligence and strictness, and zeal and cheerfulness, to the end of my life.

I desire not to live but that I may perfect holiness in thy fear, and secure to myself, by doing more good, an happy entertainment into the society of the blessed in the other world. I see already the emptiness and insufficiency of all enjoyments upon earth. *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness of it as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but thy word standeth fast for ever*[k]. *In thy*

[i] Here reckon up the sins you may have committed. [k] Isa. xl. 6, 7.

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word therefore, O Lord, and gracious promises, *is my hope. This is my comfort in my affliction*[l].

And my perfect contentment, I see, lies always in thy love and favour alone, which is better than life itself. O settle me in a certain and unmovable possession of it by what means thou pleasest. Do but love me, and preserve me in a lively sense of thy goodwill towards me, and dispose of me as thou thinkest good. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts shall delight my soul*[m]. I will *rejoice* even *in* the midst of *tribulations, and glory in thy holy name, who makest all things work together for good to them that love thee*[n]. *Though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy power and tender care, they shall comfort me*[o].

Accept, good Lord, of these my desires and resolutions, *Hear me, O God, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper*[p]; for Christ Jesus his sake, my ever blessed Redeemer. Amen.

It will be seasonable here to put the devout reader in mind, that when he is in distress, and desires mercy of God, it ought to excite his charity to others that are in misery, and dispose him to show mercy to them. For though that be not canonical scripture which we read Tobit xii. 9, *Alms doth deliver from death;* yet this is, *With the merciful God will show himself merciful*[q]. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.* If he do not *preserve him and keep him alive,* yet *the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: he will make all his bed in his sickness*[r]. Therefore, as thou recommendest thyself to God, and desirest others to pray with thee, so remember that *prayer is good, with fasting, and alms, and righteousness*[s].

A prayer to be said by the family with the sick person.

O Lord, the Father of our spirits, who *givest* to us and all

[l] Psalm cxix. 50, 81. [m] xciv. 19. [n] Rom. v. 2; viii. 28. [o] Psalm xxiii. 4. [p] xxx. 10. [q] xviii. 25. [r] xli. 1, 2, 3. [s] Tobit xii. 8.

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creatures *life and breath and all things*[s]: we sinful dust and ashes blush to lift up our eyes unto heaven, when we consider our vast distance from thee, and reflect upon thy unspotted holiness, and our impurity; thy infinite wisdom, and our wretched folly; thy power, and our weakness; thy eternity of life, and our short continuance. *We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow*[t]. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity*[u].

But so great is thy condescending grace, that thou hast assured us thou wilt not despise such worms as we are. Nay, thou hast encouraged us, blessed be thy goodness, to approach unto thee with some confidence that thou wilt mercifully receive us, though we have highly offended thy divine Majesty: having sent thy dear Son into the world to save sinners, to purify our natures, to endue us with a divine understanding, to strengthen our weakness, and to comfort us with the hope of an immortal life.

Behold, O Lord, the oblation which we make to thee of most thankful hearts, devoted to thy service; whose love and tender mercies have so exceedingly abounded towards us. We will praise thee and glorify thee as long as we have any being, for this great salvation which Christ Jesus hath brought to light by his resurrection from the dead to an eternal kingdom in the heavens. We are humbly bold to hope in thee, that thou, who *hast not spared thy own Son, but delivered him up for us all, wilt with him also freely give us all things*[y]. O thou *Father of mercies, and God of all comfort*, who hast not thought a crown of everlasting life and glory too much to promise us; we believe that thou wilt not deny us what is needful and fit for us, both for our souls and our bodies, in our passage through this world to that honour, glory and immortality.

In this confidence we more particularly recommend this thy sick servant to thy infinite and most compassionate mercy. Settle in *his*[z] soul a steadfast faith, that thou *dost not willingly*

[s] [Acts xvii. 25.] [t] Job viii. 9. [u] Psalm xxxix. 11. Job. xxv. 6.
[y] Rom. viii. 32. [z] Or *her*.

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grieve the children of men[a], but intendest good to *him* by this affliction. And now that other pleasures and enjoyments fail *him*, represent thyself effectually unto *him* as *his* true happiness and satisfaction. Whereinsoever *he* hath neglected thee, or committed any offence against thee, make *him* deeply sensible of and heartily sorrowful for *his* folly. And as *he* earnestly desires pardon and forgiveness of thee, so work in *him* a serious resolution to live more circumspectly and exactly in time to come. Assist *him* graciously, O Lord, that he may give a proof of *his* sincere intentions hereafter to submit *himself* in all things to thy will, by *his* patient submission to thy fatherly correction now. O that *he* may so quietly, so meekly, so humbly and cheerfully resign *his* will unto thee, to suffer what thou inflictest, that *he* may be the more disposed readily to deny *his* own desires, in doing whatsoever thou commandest.

For which end make *him* thoroughly apprehensive of thy sovereign power and authority over all creatures. Possess *him* with a great reverence of thy wisdom and justice; with an entire confidence in thy goodness and charity, and with a thankful remembrance of all thy past mercies to *him*, which have been innumerable; that so *he* may the better endure what thou layest upon *him* at present, and ever choose to follow thy directions, and submit to thy orders, and love thy commandments, and delight to do thy will, O God.

Bless and succeed those remedies that are used for the restoring *him* to *his* former health, that *he* may live to perform *his* holy purposes. Or if thou hast otherwise appointed, accept of them graciously, and dispose *him* to return back *his* spirit willingly unto thee who gavest it; and with great humility and deep sense of *his* own undeservings to expect thy mercy declared in Christ Jesus, who hath so highly merited of thee. Fix *his* mind steadfastly upon him, who hath led the way through the grave unto heaven; that *he* may not be affrighted with the approaches of death: but looking beyond it to that high and holy place where the Lord Jesus is, may *rejoice in hope of thy eternal glory*[b].

And give every one of us, in our best estate of health, to consider perpetually how frail and weak we are, that so we may not abuse ourselves by an intemperate use of any of the plea-

[a] [Lam. iii. 33.] [b] [Rom. v. 2.]

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sures of sense, nor load our minds with the cares of this life, nor spend our days in a vain pursuit of the honour and glory of this world: but may *pass all the time of our sojourning here in fear*[a]; and live so *soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*[b], as becomes those who expect shortly to give an account to thee, who wilt judge all men according to their works. Hear us, O Lord, we most humbly beseech thee, through Christ Jesus our merciful and compassionate High Priest, who sits at thy right hand, and lives for ever to make intercession for us. In whose name we continue to recommend ourselves, and friends, and all thy people to thee, as he hath taught us, saying, Our Father, &c.

A shorter[c].

We prostrate ourselves before thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, acknowledging that we are but dust and ashes at the best, and have made ourselves sinful dust and ashes, utterly unworthy to speak unto thee, either for ourselves or for others. We most humbly and earnestly beg thy gracious pardon, and beseech thee, for Jesus Christ his sake, to accept of our unfeigned sorrow for what is passed, and of our sincere purposes by thy gracious assistance (which we know thou wilt not deny us) to live more soberly, righteously, and godly for the time to come.

More particularly we implore thy grace and favour towards this thy sick servant, in whom we see how weak and frail we all are. Work in *him*[c] a true and hearty repentance for all the sins *he* hath committed, in thought, word, or deed, against thy divine Majesty. Give *him* a lively and steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus, who died for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Fill *him* with a reviving hope of that immortal life, which he hath purchased and promised, and with a powerful sense of thy fatherly love to *him* and tender care over *him* in the most afflicted condition. Let *him* feel thou lovest *him* by thy heavenly supports and comforts vouchsafed to *him* from above; and by bestowing on *him* perfect patience and absolute submission to thee during this sickness.

[a] 1 Pet. i. 17. [b] Tit. ii. 12. [c] [This Prayer, and the four that follow, did not form part of the original work, but were inserted by the author in the subsequent editions.] [d] Or *her*.

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We know there is nothing impossible with thee, but that if thou wilt, thou canst raise *him* up, and grant *him* a longer continuance in this world. O that it may be thy gracious pleasure to restore *him* to us! may it please thee to save *him* and deliver *him* for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Bless all the means that are used for *his* preservation, and make them effectual. Rebuke *his* disease by thy all-powerful word, and command it to leave *him*. And in the meantime, help *him* meekly to resign *himself* to thy wisdom, and humbly to confide in thy lovingkindness; and quietly to wait upon thee for ease and refreshment at present, and for perfect health and strength at last.

Which we earnestly beseech thee in thy good time to bestow upon *him*, for the sake of him who is the *resurrection and the life*, the healer and repairer of our decayed nature, the Saviour both of soul and body, our compassionate intercessor with thee, who can have a feeling of all our infirmities and miseries, and we believe is always ready to succour those who, in all their troubles, make him their refuge: to whom with thee, O Father Almighty, in the unity of the same eternal Spirit, be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, submission and reverence, love and observance, cheerful service, and hearty obedience, both now and for evermore. Amen.

A prayer to be said by the family or friends when a sickness continues long.

Behold, O Lord, thy poor unworthy servants, who here most humbly bow themselves unto thee, acknowledging that we deserve not to live, nor to have the least regard from thee in our distress, whom we so much neglected when we enjoyed our heart's desire. Be merciful unto us, O Lord, be merciful unto us, for the sake of him who shed his own most precious blood for the salvation of returning sinners. We come unto thee with sorrowful hearts, bewailing our foolish wanderings from thee, and with sincere love vowing more faithful obedience hereafter to thee.

Blessed be thy goodness that we have such good hope thou wilt not cast us off, but restore us again into thy grace and

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favour. It encourages us to hope in thee also for this thy sick servant here lying under thy hand in great weakness of body. Look graciously upon *him*[b], O Lord, and "now that *his* outward man is much decayed, strengthen *him*, we beseech thee, so much the more by the grace of thy Holy Spirit in *his* inward man." Give *him* unfeigned repentance for all the errors of *his* life past; a steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus; a comfortable assurance of the truth of all his precious promises; a lively hope of that immortal bliss in which he reigns for evermore; and a strong sense of thy fatherly love to *him*, and care over *him*, under this sore and grievous affliction: which may make *him* heartily love thee, and entirely confide in thee, and absolutely resign both soul and body to thy wise disposal.

We know there is nothing too hard for thee, but that, if thou wilt, thou canst bring *him* up, even from the gates of death, and grant *him* a longer continuance among us. May it be thy good pleasure, O most gracious God, still to continue *him!* Spare *him*, O Lord, and deliver *him* also speedily from this misery, under which *he* hath so long groaned. Bless all the means that are used for *his* recovery, and for the support of *his* spirits; and give *him* refreshment during this tedious sickness. Release *him* from *his* pain, or grant *him* some ease, or else increase and strengthen *his* patience. Help *him*, in remembrance of thy past lovingkindness, to trust in thy goodness, and submit to thy wisdom, and bear with an equal mind what thou thinkest fit to lay upon *him*, that *he* approving *himself* to thee in these and all other virtues, while thou tryest *him* by so sore an affliction, may say, at the last, *It was good for me that I was in trouble*[c].

Unto thy infinite mercies we recommend *him*, and to the compassionate kindness of our Lord Jesus. Who, we hope, will hear all the prayers of *his* friends for *him* everywhere, and send his good Spirit to be *his* comforter, and *his* good angels to be *his* guardians; and direct those who are to advise and prescribe the means of *his* restoration, and bring *him* to praise thee again in the assemblies of thy saints on earth; or, if thou hast otherwise disposed in thy wise counsels, to praise thee in the great assembly of saints and angels in heaven:

[b] Or *her*. [c] [Ps. cxix. 71.]

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through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour; to whom, with thee and thy Holy Spirit, be all praise, love and obedience, world without end. Amen.

A prayer to be said by the family or friends when the sick person wants sleep.

Adored be thy love, thy wonderful love, O most gracious God, who hast so many ways expressed thy bounty towards us. Thy mercies in Christ Jesus surpass all our thoughts. Nor are we able to number all the other blessings thou hast bestowed on us. How much do we owe thee for the quiet sleep of but one night! We see in this thy poor afflicted servant how much we ought to thank thee for this single blessing, that our eyes, when we would close them, are not held waking.

Pardon, good Lord, our foul ingratitude for this and all the rest of thy undeserved mercies. And be pleased graciously also to visit *him*[c] who still languisheth on *his* sick bed, looking up to thee, from whom cometh our help. Renew *his* wasted spirits with comfortable sleep. Compose *him* to a sweet and undisturbed rest. Refresh *him* thereby so sensibly that *he* may be restored to such a degree of strength as may make *him* able, in some measure, affectionately to acknowledge thy goodness when thou hast dealt so bountifully with *him*.

Or if thou delayest to bestow that blessing on *him*, O God, that in the multitude of *his* thoughts within *him*, thy comforts may delight *his* soul. If *he* be still tossed upon a wearisome bed without any rest, O that *his* mind may rest and repose itself in the bosom of thy dearest love, and may feel the most sensible consolations from heaven, not only quieting, but greatly rejoicing *his* heart. Preserve the use of *his* understanding, and let the enemy have no advantage of *him*; but make *him* able to say, *I will wait patiently for the Lord, till he incline his ear unto me, and hear my cry*[d].

O hear his *prayer*, O Lord, *and give ear unto* his *cry*. *O spare* him, *that* he *may recover strength, before* he *go hence and be no more*[e].

Amen, for Jesus Christ his sake, Amen.

[d] Ps. xl. 1. [e] xxxix. 12, 13.

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A prayer to be said by the family or friends when the sick person grows lightheaded.

O Lord, look down from heaven in much pity and compassion upon this thy afflicted servant, who is not able now to look up unto thee. The sadder *his*[f] condition grows, the fitter object it is of thy infinite tender mercies: who acceptest, we believe, of the submission *he* made of *himself* in the beginning of *his* sickness to thy almighty wisdom and goodness; and therefore, since it is thy pleasure to suffer *his* distemper to proceed to this dangerous extremity, wilt no less graciously love *him* and delight in *him* than if *he* could still give up *himself* to thy blessed will.

And hear, O most merciful Father, our prayers in *his* behalf. Excite them also to a greater ardency than ever for *him*, now that *he* can no longer commend *himself* to thy mercies. Pardon, good Lord, pardon all *his* sins. Impute not to *him* any of *his* former follies. Lay not to *his* charge *his* not improving, or anyways misusing of *his* reason and understanding: which we earnestly, but humbly intreat thee to restore to *him*, together with such a measure of thy divine grace as may quicken and assist *him* then to employ *his* thoughts to the best purposes: especially in meditating of thy mercies, in studying thy praise, and in exhorting all others to love thee, and trust thee, and sincerely obey thee.

And while *he* remains thus deprived of *his* reason, be pleased to quiet and compose *his* spirits, or to prevent all furious motions there, or quickly to abate such violent passions, if any arise. For which end be pleased to remove all frightful imaginations far from *him;* and suffer not the evil one to approach *him:* preserve *him* from doing any harm, either to *himself* or to any other. *Forsake* him *not, O Lord, O our God, be not far from* him. *Make haste to help* him, *O Lord, our salvation*[g]. He *is poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh on* him[h]*: thou art our helper and deliverer, make no tarrying, O our God. So will we all give thanks unto thee for ever*[i]. *We will be still praising thee, and showing forth thy*

[f] Or *her*. [g] Ps. xxxviii. 21, 22. [h] xl. 17; lxxviii. 7. [i] lxxix. 13.

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lovingkindness to those who succeed us. That they may set their hope in thee, our God, and not forget thy works, but keep thy commandments[l].

Amen, Amen; make us all so happy for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

A prayer to be said by any pious person for a sick neighbour.

O most gracious God, who by thy Son Jesus hath knit us all together in one body, that we should love one another, and *whether one member suffer, all the members should suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the rest should rejoice with it*[m]: I humbly implore thy tender mercies towards *N. N.*, of whose afflicted condition I desire to have a compassionate sense and feeling. Look graciously upon *him*[n], O Lord, and visit *him* with thy salvation. Vouchsafe *him* such consolations from above, as I should desire for myself were I in *his* estate. Give *him* a true penitent heart for all the offences *he* hath at any time committed: together with a lively faith in thy Son Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners. Give *him* the comfort of a holy hope that thou acceptest *his* repentance and faithful devotion to thee. Support *him* by this hope under all *his* pain, and enable *him* patiently to submit to thy fatherly correction. Send *him* help now in time of need, both for *his* soul and for *his* body. Bless the means of *his* recovery: and if it be thy good pleasure, restore *him* speedily to *his* former health; together with a serious resolution in *his* heart, to serve thee more zealously all *his* days.

Or if thou hast otherwise resolved in thy wise counsels, deliver *him* from the fear of death; assist *him* in *his* last agony; give *him* an easy and cheerful passage out of this life; and send thy Holy angels to conduct *him* into rest and peace with our Lord Jesus. To whom with thee, O Father of mercies, and thy Holy Spirit, be given all honour, glory and praise, by all creatures in heaven and earth, from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

If the disease proceed to such an extremity that in all appearance the soul is ready to depart, there is a *Commendatory*

[l] [Ps. lxxviii. 6, 7.] [m] [1 Cor. xii. 26.] [n] Or *her*.

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Prayer appointed in the public offices of devotion, to be said by the minister, whose assistance then sure will be desired. And besides, the sick person himself, as long as he is able, may thus recommend his soul unto Almighty God.

A prayer when a person is giving up the ghost.

I resign my spirit, O God, most cheerfully into thy hands; hoping to find mercy with thee through Christ Jesus. I know no other name under heaven whereby I may be saved, but thine alone, O blessed Jesus; who *wast dead, and art alive again, and livest for evermore* [m]. I come unto thee, O Lord, confiding in thy most precious promises (which I believe are *faithful* and *true* as thou art) for pardon and for immortal life.

Accept, I beseech thee, of my most hearty thanks for all thy mercies to me, from the beginning of my life to this moment. Pass by all my ingratitude and disobedience. Receive me into the company of the *spirits of just men made perfect* [n], to give thee thanks for ever.

And as I desire to find mercy with thee, so I forgive all my enemies; beseeching thee likewise to forgive them, and to bless and comfort all my friends, and to make thy whole church glorious: and to bring us all at last to live together in everlasting love and joy, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

An act of resignation when a friend is dead.

I adore thee, O Lord, I bow my very will, with my whole soul, to thee, *whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out* [o]. I believe thou intendest to do me good, even by denying my earnest and so often repeated desires. *I will bless the Lord* therefore *at all times. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord* [p].

I have received innumerable good things from thy hands, O Father of mercies, why should I not receive those that are evil? *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it* [q]? I humbly take it from thy hands, O my God, and submit to thy wise dispensation. I return to thee back again

[m] Rev. i. 18. [n] [Heb. xii. 23.] [o] [Rom. xii. 33.] [p] [Job i. 21.] [q] [John xviii. 11.]

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that which thou so lovingly bestowedst upon me, with my most hearty thanks for lending me the enjoyment of it so long. Do but pardon all my ingratitude, all the omissions of my duty, and whatsoever I have done contrary to it; and I shall endeavour to *rejoice in thee always*, and still to be praising thee under the sharpest chastisements, which are less than I deserve.

Blessed be thy goodness that I am not without hope of this gracious pardon. Blessed be thy goodness that thou hast not taken away thy Holy Spirit from me. Yea, blessed be that goodness that hath left me still so many worldly blessings which many want, and have lost their dearest relations too. It is of the Lord's mercy that lovers, friends and acquaintance, together with all other comforts of this life, are not quite gone away from me, and removed into darkness. Blessed be God, that I am not groaning on a sick bed; and that I languish not under the most tedious pains. Blessed be God that I want not my daily bread, that I am not oppressed with debt, that I lie not in prison, or am not turned out of doors, having no certain dwellingplace. Yea, blessed be God that all my days have not been so miserable as some few have been. Blessed be God that the days which I and *he*[r] (who hath now left me) spent together, were not all bitterness and sorrow; but were sweetened by the enjoyment of many, very many good things.

O my soul, never cease to *bless the Lord; forget not all his benefits*[s]; especially his great love, his exceeding great love in Christ Jesus, by whom he hath provided a remedy for all our griefs, and comforted us with the hope of another and better life, where there is no death, nor any pain or sorrow; but all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes.

To thee I flee, O blessed Jesus, who art my best and my eternal friend; to thee who knowest our frame, and canst have compassion on our infirmities: most humbly beseeching thee to bear me up under this sore affliction, in a thankful remembrance of all thy mercies. Yea, draw up my heart thereby more towards heaven, where thou my life art [where I hope my *husband*, *wife* or *friend* is], where I hope to be when thou shalt call me away from hence: there to sing thy praises with

[r] Or *she*. [s] [Ps. ciii. 2.]

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incessant joy, in the company of all thy saints and of the holy angels. Amen, Amen.

A prayer when there is some hope of the sick man's recovery.

We cast down ourselves before thee, O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, to implore thy grace and favour towards this thy servant; who still lies under thy hand in great weakness of body. We thank thee, O Lord, that *he*[o] is no weaker; but though *he* be brought very low, we have some hope thou wilt raise *him* up again. Blessed be thy goodness that he is not gone down into silence, and hath not made his bed in the dust. Blessed be thy goodness.

O thou *Preserver of men*, who hast begun to revive and quicken him again; go on to perfect that which belongs to *his* cure, and forsake not the work of thy own hands. Repair all the decays in *his* outward man, that *his* mind may also recover its former strength to praise and bless thy goodness to *him*.

And visit *him* in the mean time with thy heavenly consolation from above. Fill *him* with comfortable thoughts of thy love, and of the tender compassionate care which our Lord Jesus takes of all his afflicted servants. Endue *him* still with more patient submission to thy will: and enable *him* both quietly to wait upon thee, till thou hast finished *his* recovery, and also to continue steadfastly resolved to serve thee more faithfully with *his* restored strength, through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. By whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

A thanksgiving for the beginning of a recovery.

O most great and mighty Lord, *who killest and makest alive, who bringest down to the grave and bringest up again*[p]: we thy poor creatures (most infinitely obliged to be thy faithful servants), who have so often sorrowfully cast down ourselves before thee to implore thy mercy towards this our afflicted friend, do now most joyfully fall upon our knees to thank thee

[o] Or *she*.

[p] 1 Sam. ii. 6.

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with one accord for the gracious audience thou hast given to our prayers: desiring to have our hearts raised to as great a degree of fervent love to thee, as they were of passionate desires that thou wouldest spare *him*[q] from going down to the grave.

Blessed be God, who *hath not turned away our prayer, nor his mercy from us.* Blessed be God for preserving our dear friend, who is still in the land of the living. Blessed be thy wonderful goodness (which we will never forget), who hast, in some measure, turned our heaviness into joy and our mourning into gladness. Blessed be thy goodness, who hast begun to lift *him* up from the gates of death, and restored *him* to some degree of health. Yea, blessed be that goodness, which did not forsake *him* in *his* sickness; but visited *him* with comforts from above, supported *him* in patience and submission to thy will, sent *him* seasonable relief, and prospered the endeavours of those who consulted for his preservation.

We hope we shall never cease to speak of thy loving-kindness; but be still praising thee, whose mercy endures for ever. Who we hope also wilt proceed to consummate thy mercy towards *him*, by raising *him* up to praise thee together with us, in perfect health of body, and vigour of mind, and cheerfulness of spirit.

For which end, be pleased still to direct and bless the medicines that are prescribed for the perfecting of *his* cure. Succeed them, O Lord, that *he* may be able at last to go into thy house, to offer thee an oblation with great gladness; and to bless thy holy name for thy wonderful works towards *him*, and towards the children of men: through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

If God be pleased to restore the sick person to a state of health, public thanksgiving ought to be rendered to Almighty God for it; and together with the *sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of our lips* (Heb. xiii. 15, 16.), he *ought not to forget to do good and to communicate* to them that are in misery; *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* And, to preserve

[q] Or *her*.

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a grateful remembrance of God's mercy, here follows a form of thanksgiving, to be used in private by himself, and by his friends that are concerned in his recovery.

A thanksgiving after recovery from a sickness, to be said by the person himself who is restored to health.

O God, the Fountain of life and of all good, who art continually more and more pouring forth thy benefits upon us; I, thy poor creature, whose life thou hast mercifully spared when I deserved to be cut off, prostrate myself in an humble sense of thy Divine goodness, to render thee my most hearty thanks, and to renew my vows which I made in the day of my distress.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with me after my sins; nor rewarded me according to my iniquities: but *as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed my transgressions from me*[r]. *O taste and see,* my soul, *how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in him*[s]. *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death*[t].

I will give thanks therefore *unto the Lord with my whole heart, secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation*[u]. I can do no less than dedicate this new life which thou hast bestowed upon me entirely to thy service; resolving to employ more vigorously all those powers of soul and body, which are so graciously restored unto me, unto thy honour and glory.

For which end I most earnestly desire to have a lively sense preserved in my mind of those things which were most powerful to move my heart towards thee in the time of my sickness. O that this world may ever appear unto me as it was then

[r] Ps. ciii. 1–5, 8–10, 12. [s] xxxiv. 8. [t] cxviii. 17, 18. [u] cxi. 1.

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represented to my mind! that I may never set my heart too much upon these perishing enjoyments and short satisfactions; nor ever neglect thee, whose favour and grace I then sought so earnestly as my chiefest good! but remembering how little comfort I could find in anything here; what a joy it was to have any hope in thee, the eternal God; and how that in my best estate I am but altogether vanity; I may most seriously apply myself to *work out my salvation with fear and trembling*, and give all diligence to settle a steadfast hope in thee that never may be shaken.

Make me often to remember that *my days are but like a shadow that declineth*, and that *I wither like the grass: but thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever;* for *thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end*[x]: that so I may neither seek my happiness in this dying life, but in thy endless love and favour; nor *be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*[y].

Blessed be thy goodness that I feel these holy thoughts and desires still remaining in me. Excite me, I humbly beseech thee, continually to renew them, that no day may pass without serious reflections upon thy patient and longsuffering kindness towards me, upon the shortness of this life, the uncertainty of all earthly comforts, and the happiness of having a good hope in thee by steadfast continuance in well-doing. And let these thoughts be so deeply imprinted in my heart, that my affections may be weaned thereby from all things here below, and set on things above, where Christ is at thy right hand.

O that I may desire and covet those heavenly things for my portion more than I do to eat and drink, or enjoy any other pleasure of this life! Make me to rejoice in them more than in a whole world of other comforts; and to stand in greater fear of losing them than I do to die, or endure any misery. Preserve in me, good Lord, such a sober and considerate disposition of mind, that I may never be proud, who am, I see, but dust and ashes; nor confident of my own strength and power, which is but weakness and vanity; nor distrustful of thee, who art so gracious and merciful, as well as mighty to save. Suffer me not to sink under any discouragements, who have the ever-

[x] Ps. cii. 11, 12, 27. [y] Rom. xii. 11.

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lasting arms under me, the wisdom of heaven to direct and guide me, and the infinite treasures of goodness to supply all my necessities.

And more particularly I beseech thee to give me grace by my late confinement, weakness, dulness, want of appetite and rest, to learn to value very highly the benefits of liberty, strength, and quickness of all my senses; and to bless thee more than ever I have done for the constant refreshments of my food in the day, and of undisturbed sleep in the night, together with the rest of the pleasures of life, to which thou hast restored me with my health.

Make me perfectly contented in any state and condition whilst I enjoy so great a blessing as that, which comprehends so many others in it. And when thou art pleased to take it again away from me, O that I may be able to be contented then also, in a remembrance of all thy past kindnesses to me, and of a well-spent life, and careful improvement of this renewed health; and in hope of thy continued mercies to me in Christ Jesus, even to eternal life! To which I humbly beseech thee to bring me by an unchangeable love and obedience to thee in all the changes and alterations of this mortal life, for his sake who loved me and gave himself for me: to whom with thyself, in the unity of the same Spirit, be glory everlasting. Amen.

A thanksgiving to be said by the family.

O most holy, great, and glorious God, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, who upholdest all things by the word of thy power, and governest the whole world with admirable wisdom, justice, and mercy! thou deservest the highest acknowledgments of all thy creatures. The praises of angels are not worthy of thee, nor any of their thoughts equal to thy infinite Majesty. What can we vile creatures then speak of thee, or what thoughts shall we frame of thy perfections? especially of the transcendent love which hath moved thee in much compassion to consider our weaknesses, and help our infirmities? Thou hast taught us by our Lord Jesus what we should think of thee; having vouchsafed to dwell among us, and make thyself visible unto us, not only as the most wise and mighty,

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but as the most holy, righteous, gracious, and merciful Lord, who designest the greatest blessings to us.

But now that we see thee, we have the greatest reason to abhor ourselves in dust and ashes, when we consider how unlike we are unto thee in those excellent qualities wherein thou hast made thyself known unto us, and how unthankful we have been unto thy divine goodness, which hast so strangely condescended unto us, who are unworthy of the least regard from thee. And yet such is thy tender mercy and pity towards us, that thou hast declared thyself willing to entertain even the greatest sinners into thy favour by making them better. We ourselves have received innumerable tokens of thy great clemency, patience, and forbearance; and now lately thou hast been pleased to give us a new instance of thy loving-kindness, and of thy desire to win our hearts unto thee, in rescuing one of us from going down into the grave, and restoring *him* to health and strength again.

The living, the living, O Lord, *shall praise thee, as we do this day*[z]*:* yea, *we will bless thy name as long as we live, and sing praises unto thee as long as we have any being*[a]*. We will praise thee, O Lord our God, with all our heart, and glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy towards us: and thou hast delivered* the soul of thy servant *from the lowest hell*[b]*. The Lord is our strength and our song, and is become our salvation. The voice of joy and health is in our dwellings: the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass*[c].

O that there were such an heart in every one of us, as to study seriously to know thee better, to meditate continually on thy benefits both to our souls and bodies, to love thee entirely, and to endeavour to be like unto thee, which is the design of thy goodness towards us! Empty our hearts of all other things, and make room for thyself to dwell there in wisdom, righteousness, and true holiness.

Dispose every one of us to follow Jesus Christ our Master "in lowliness, patience, and charity; and to be ordered by the governance of his Holy Spirit; seeking always his glory, and serving him duly in our vocation with thanksgiving[d]." Help

[z] Is. xxxviii. 19. [a] Ps. civ. 33. [d] Common Prayer Book, in the Commination.
[b] lxxxvi. 12, 13. [c] cxviii. 14, 15.

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us so to employ our time in our health, prosperity, and pleasure, that we may have nothing to trouble us in the time of sickness, affliction, and sorrow; but we may quietly and cheerfully bear what thou layest upon us; *looking unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at thy right hand*[d].

O blessed Lord, deny us not the constant assistance of the Holy Ghost, to cherish, confirm, and strengthen our holy resolutions; to succeed our pious endeavours; to give us a quick sense of all thy mercies, and a lively remembrance of all thy fatherly chastisements, whereby we may be more and more excited to diligence, watchfulness, and zeal in thy service. Preserve us from a slothful and negligent spirit; and awaken in us such a sense of thee, and of our duty to thee, that we may search after thy will diligently, and believe it heartily, and practise it carefully, and watch against all temptations heedfully, and pray fervently and frequently, and ponder seriously and thoroughly all the instructions we have received from thee, and our many and great obligations to thee.

O that it may be our choice to attend on thee, and that our hearts may be still with thee when our necessities require our attendance to other things. That so we may not be too deeply engaged in the affairs of this life to the prejudice of the eternal life of our souls; but we may go on to make it our great business to be truly godly, according to the pattern which our Lord hath left us, till we be fit to be lifted up to that high and holy place where we believe he is, and see the glory which thou hast given him.

Now to him that *holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved*[e]: to the *God of our salvation, to whom belong the issues from death*[f]: *who hath turned our heaviness into joy, and put off our mourning, and girded us with gladness*[g]: to him *that doth wondrous things, the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever*[h]. Amen.

[d] [Heb. xii. 2.] [e] Ps. lxvi. 9. [f] lxviii. 20. [g] xxx. 11. [h] Jude 25.

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A parent's prayer for a sick child.

O Lord, by whose infinite goodness I was brought into this world, and by whose indulgent care I have been continued here unto this time in the enjoyment of a great many blessings, of the least of which I am unworthy: I thank thee that to all other comforts of this life thou hast added the gift of this child, whom thou hast preserved in its birth, and ever since, by a marvellous providence. I am sensible that all I have is thine, and that I am but intrusted with this, as with all other good things, which I must return to thee whensoever thou pleasest.

Lord, assist me with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, (which, I know, thou art more ready to give than any other blessing,) that I may resign this child to thee if thou art pleased now to call for it, with an humble, contented, patient, and thankful mind, believing thou knowest better what is good for me than I do myself; and wilt certainly recompense such meek and quiet submission to thee with as good or better enjoyments than those thou takest away. But if thou thinkest good still to prolong its days, and continue it with me (which I most humbly beg of thy divine Majesty); behold, O Lord, the unfeigned purpose of my heart faithfully to discharge my trust, and to bring it up in the fear and nurture of our Lord.

Endue me with principles of true wisdom and prudence, that I may educate it aright. Help me to give it a good example, and to use all diligence that it may *serve its generation according to thy will*, and at last be returned back to thee, wise, and pure, and just, and good; fit for the company of the blessed in endless life. Unto thee, O Lord, I most heartily recommend both it and myself, whose wisdom knows where it is best to place thy creatures, whether in this or in the other world, and whose goodness designs to make us happy in both. To thee, the only wise and good God, be all praise, honour, glory, and thanksgiving; with fear and reverence, love and cheerful obedience, both now and eternally. Amen.

Here follow prayers and thanksgivings on sundry other occasions, which we may meet withal in the course of our life.

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in which it will be fit particularly to acknowledge God, and implore his mercy towards us. And let it be remembered, as I said before, that it is a part of Christian piety to take care that alms and acts of charity to others accompany our addresses to God. They are then certainly most seasonable when we desire special favours from him, or return thanks for them. And hereby (as old Tobias said, iv. 9, 11.) we lay up a good treasure for ourselves against the day of necessity. For alms is a good gift unto all them that give it in the sight of the most High.

A prayer to be used by one that is going a long journey.

O God, who art alike present unto all places, *who preservest man and beast*[i], *for thou art good to all, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works: all thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and declare thy power*[k].

Blessed be thy name for the knowledge thou hast given me of thy wise and merciful providence encompassing all creatures. And more particularly I rejoice in the revelation which thou hast made of thy fatherly love and care over us, the children of men, in Christ Jesus: *who makes his angels ministering spirits for them that are heirs of salvation*[l]. In an hearty belief of thy holy gospel, and a sincere resolution to be obedient unto it, in hope of that eternal life, I commit both my soul and body to thy most gracious protection: who *art the defender of all them that put their trust in thee*[m].

I trust thee, O Lord, with myself and all belonging to me, I entirely depend on thy goodness to be with me, and prosper me in the way that I go. Give thy good angels charge of me; and especially accompany me with the presence of thy Holy Spirit, to preserve my soul in safety from all evil thoughts, desires, or passions that may any way betray me in word or deed to offend thy divine Majesty. Deliver me from the danger of any evil company into which I may fall; that I may not frame myself to the humours of profane persons, but by a pious and discreet behaviour rather reprove them. And give me grace thankfully to embrace the company of those who are

[i] Ps. xxxvi. 6. [k] cxlv. 9, 10, 11. [l] Heb. i. ult. [m] Ps. xviii. 30.

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good, if I be blessed with it, that I may rejoice in their society, and improve it to my increase in wisdom or pious affections towards thee.

Bless this habitation also, which I leave and all remaining in it: that at what distance soever we be one from another, we may all live and walk in the same spirit of faith, and love, and holiness. Give us an happy meeting together again in this place, if it be thy good will and pleasure, to pay thee the vows which I make of greater care and diligence in thy service, and greater charity towards all my neighbours. Howsoever, in the end of our pilgrimage, bring us all together into that blessed rest which thou hast prepared for thy people, after all their travels and labours, through thy mercy in Christ Jesus. To which I commend myself, and all mine, both now and ever. Amen.

A short prayer in one's inn, or at the end of the journey.

Blessed be thy goodness, O Lord, my Creator and continual preserver, by which I have been led in safety to this place; and am not only alive, but sound and unmaimed. To thee, O God, will I sing and give praise, who hast *dealt so bountifully with me. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live*[n]. *I will walk also with a perfect heart before the Lord*[o]*: who is my shield, and my exceeding great reward*[p].

Preserve in me, I beseech thee, a pious remembrance of all thy mercies, and of all those holy resolutions which they excite in me. Take me still into thy almighty protection. Continue me in thy fear, and love, and faithful obedience. That, having finished this journey in peace, I may return to the place from whence I came, full of thankful affections to thee, and zealously disposed to perform my vows in a careful discharge of all the duties which my place and relations require of me. And enable me, good Lord, ever to perform them with uprightness of heart and good will, as becomes the servant of Christ Jesus.

[n] Ps. cxvi. 1, 7–9. [o] Gen. xvii. 1. [p] xv. 1.

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To the same merciful Providence which hath watched over me all this day, I commend myself, and all my relations and friends everywhere, this night; beseeching thee to awaken in me, in the morning, the same love and thankfulness and humble confidence which I now find, and desire ever to have in my heart towards thee, my gracious Father, Saviour, and Deliverer. To whom be glory, honour, and praise everlasting. Amen.

A prayer in case of any hurt from thieves, or otherwise.

O most merciful Father, for so I ought ever to acknowledge thee, without whom one of the smallest creatures cannot fall to the ground[r], and to whom we are of more value than many of them; I humbly and meekly submit myself to this cross in my way, which thou, in thy wisdom, hast suffered to befall me. I know that thou art able to make even this, with all other things, work together for my good: and therefore I beseech thee but graciously to pardon my sins, which deserve greater punishment, and to preserve my soul still in safety from all murmuring and repining at thy providence, by a steadfast faith and trust in thee, and an absolute resignation to thy holy will and pleasure, and I shall not cease to bless thee, and to speak good of thy name.

Help me to learn by this to live in a constant sense of the uncertainty of all worldly hopes, to set my affections more perfectly on unchangeable enjoyments, and to place my happiness only in cheerful obedience and contented patience in all estates and conditions of life. I remember that we are all but pilgrims and strangers whilst we are here, subject to many other changes and chances in this mortal life. And therefore, whatsoever I, or those I have left at home, may further suffer before my return, Lord, assist us all to take that patiently also; and as we have received so many good things from thee, to receive likewise that which is evil; giving thanks to thee, the Father of mercies, who hast given us such a good hope of perfect security, peace, and joy in our heavenly country, when we have done and endured all thy pleasure. In the expectation of which blessed state I will continually rejoice; praying thee

[r] Matt. x. 29.

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to purify me more and more, that I may be prepared for it, and at last, by thy mercy, enter into it to give thee eternal praises. Amen.

A prayer to be said for a friend in a journey.

O God, whose almighty power, and wise providence, and omnipresent goodness, is the security, support, and comfort of all those that know thee: it is the highest satisfaction of our souls to have a lively hope in thee of eternal life in the other world: and to be persuaded that thou lovest us, and wilt take care of us, and bless us whilst we continue here; and that nothing can befal us without the knowledge and consent of thy infinite goodness, which gives the most solid peace and repose unto our spirits in all the alterations and changes of this life. I rejoice in the belief that I live in a world which is full of thee; that I am always under thy eye, and have thee near unto me, as to observe me, so to help, protect, and defend me.

And, I beseech thee, fill the mind of *him*[s] who is now gone from me with the same sense of thee, that *he* may carry along with *him* everywhere this steadfast faith and hope in thee, as the stay, the rest, and the refreshment of *his* soul. How far soever *he* be from me, O that *he* may be nigh to thee, in frequent serious thoughts of thee, and hearty love to thee, and perfect trust in thee, and a constant disposition of mind and will to do and be what thou pleasest! that, travelling under the shadow of the Almighty, no harm may come to *him;* but even those things which we account the greatest mischiefs, if they shall betide *him*, may be humbly accepted by us all with fear and reverence and cheerful submission to thee, as becomes those who profess ourselves thy friends as well as thy servants.

No thieves, murderers, or other evil persons or things can approach *him*, I know, without thy leave, who governest and overrulest the motions of every creature at thy pleasure; to which we ever ought to submit our own. But if thou thinkest good to restore *him* hither again untouched by any of them, Lord help us to be so much the more thankful to thee, who dealest with us according to our own hearts' desire. O that the sense of thy goodness, then, may so powerfully affect our

[s] Or *her*.

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hearts, that we may be moved thereby to a greater zeal and freedom of spirit in thy service, and be the more forward to imitate thee in doing good, and showing mercy to all men! O that thy benefits may never slip out of our minds! O that the *meditation of them may be sweet*[t] unto us! and we may learn thereby *to trust in thee at all times, and pour out our hearts before thee! for thou art a refuge for us*[u].

Now the merciful God give him *good success in all things*[x]*! The God which dwelleth in heaven prosper* his *journey, and the angels of God keep* him *company*[y]*!* Amen[z].

A thanksgiving for a safe return home.

In an humble, joyful sense of thy fatherly care and providence over me ever since I went from this place (to which thou hast brought me back in peace and safety), I cast down myself at thy feet, O Lord God of heaven, praising thy Almighty goodness, with an heart full of love and devotion to thee. It is of thy mercy alone that I am not consumed, and because thy compassions fail not. That I am not groaning under sickness, or wounds and bruises in my body, not sighing for the loss of my goods either at home or abroad, is to be ascribed to that tender mercy which spreads itself over all thy works, and hath been a covering to me night and day, in every place where I have been, from I know not how many dangers. I thank thee also for letting me see the faces of my relations and friends again, and that no evil hath come nigh their dwellings; but especially for preserving my soul in integrity and uprightness before thee; and for delivering me from the power of temptations, and from wounding my conscience by any wilful offence against thy divine Majesty.

It is too little to render to thee my praises and thanksgivings; I will pay thee my vows wherein I stand engaged to thee, and here offer unto thee myself, soul and body, to be made a more pure, perfect, and acceptable sacrifice unto thee through Christ Jesus. Maintain, I beseech thee, such a lively and lasting remembrance of thy kindness in my heart, as may

[t] Ps. civ. 34. [u] lxii. 8. a short ejaculation in *his* behalf at
[x] Tobit iv. 16. [y] vii. 12. any time of the day.
[z] These last words may serve for

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both provoke me to love and to good works, and also strengthen my faith and hope in thee on all occasions for the time to come.

I ought not to forget, now that I mention thy late deliverances, all the rest of thy mercies; which are so many and so various, that, alas! we take little notice of many of them. In the constant and undisturbed course of them, we are apt to be less sensible how much we stand indebted to thee for them: yea, they have been so long continued to us, and we are so far from the beginning of them, that we are too prone to forget the head and fountain from whence they spring.

O how sad is it that we should love thee less because thou lovest us so much! and that we should think the seldomer of thy bounty because thou constantly rememberest us and doest us good! How much should we praise thee for our health and ease, if we were sick or in pain but a few days! and yet now we praise thee but a little, though we are well many years. How thankful should we be if we were freed from the devil, after he had affrighted and vexed us but one night! and yet now, alas! we scarce mind thy goodness, which perpetually preserves us from his assaults.

Endue me, O God of all grace, with a more serious spirit, often reflecting and meditating upon thee and upon thy benefits, both to my soul and body, for this life and that which is to come; that I may not be taught the value and number of thy blessings by being deprived of them, but in their constant use and enjoyment may ever duly ponder them, extolling and praising thy infinite goodness, with sensible love to thee, and delight in doing of thy will.

For which end, I beseech thee to endue me with power from above, that I may not deceive my own soul with some passionate desire, transports of joy, or sudden resolutions; but deliberately and with the full consent of my heart devoting myself to thy service, I may conscientiously study to improve all thy mercies to the honour and glory of thy name, the credit of my religion, the good and profit of my neighbours, and my own solid peace and comfort at present, and eternal joy at the day of the Lord.

And bless all others, I beseech thee, that desire the same mercy of which thou hast made me partaker. Receive them

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into thy protection; conduct them safely to the end of their journeys; make them ever mindful of thy loving-kindness, and careful to remember that every new benefit is a new bond to better obedience. Unto which, good Lord, incline us all more and more for thy mercies' sake in Christ Jesus; by whom and for whom thy glorious Name be blessed and praised for ever. Amen.

A prayer to be said by one going a voyage on the sea; which may be used with a little alteration by his friends for him.

O most mighty Lord, *the God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea*[a]; under whose powerful protection we are alike secure in every place; and without whose providence over us we can nowhere be in safety: I am sensible of the tender care thou hast long taken of me, and that I have been preserved by thee from innumerable dangers both in my infancy and childhood, and ever since; for which I have not thanked thee as I ought. I most humbly beseech thee graciously to pardon this and all other my offences, which might justly weaken my confidence in thee, did I not feel thy grace in Christ Jesus, who died for us, to be so great, as to fill my heart not only with unfeigned sorrow for them, but with holy resolutions to be more grateful and dutiful in time to come.

This emboldens me, with an humble faith in thy Almighty goodness, to commend myself still to the conduct, guidance, and blessing of thy merciful providence. O God, receive me, though a sinful creature, into thy favour and grace. Purge my heart from all affection to everything that is evil; that I may not carry the sense of any guilt unrepented of along with me in my voyage; but have my heart settled in such an unmovable love of all piety, righteousness, and sobriety of mind and life, that no storm or tempest or other danger may dismay me and make me afraid. They are all, I know, in thy hands; to which I commit myself with an entire trust in thee, that nothing shall hurt me while I follow that which is good.

If thou art pleased to bring me to my desired haven, Lord, possess me then with these good thoughts and affections which

[a] Ps. lxv. 5.

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I feel at present in my heart towards thee; that my chief joy may be in thee, and in the love I find in my heart to thee, and I may never forget thee by intemperate mirth and pleasure in any other enjoyment. But if thou thinkest good otherwise to dispose of me, thy will, O Lord, be done: I commend both my body and my spirit into thy hands, who art able to make the sea give up her dead by thine almighty word.

Help me always to hold fast that hope of eternal life *as an anchor of my soul, both sure and steadfast*, which may preserve me in unshaken comfort and joy at the hour of death itself; and looking up to that quiet place whither *Jesus, our forerunner, is entered for us*, I may begin those praises and thanksgivings which I hope shall have no end, but be continued for ever in the company of the blessed in the other world: unto which I beseech thee of thine infinite mercies to bring me through Christ Jesus, who *is made an High Priest for ever*[b]. Amen.

A thanksgiving after it is finished, and the party returned home again.

O blessed Lord, *thou art great, and greatly to be praised*[c]; for *by thy word the heavens were made; and all the hosts of them by the breath of thy mouth. Thou didst gather the waters of the sea together as an heap; and laidst them up in the storehouses of the deeps*[d]. They are all at thy command, and *whatsoever thou pleasest, that doest thou in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places*[e]. *I have seen thy works, O Lord, and thy wonders in the deep: for thou spakest the word, and the stormy wind arose, which lifted up the waves thereof.* And again, *when we cried unto thee, thou madest the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof were still*[f].

Blessed be thy almighty goodness, which carried me safe through such great and dreadful dangers. Blessed be thy goodness, that the deep hath not swallowed me up, and that I am not gone down into silence. Blessed be thy goodness, that neither my body nor my goods became a prey to unreasonable men; but that thou broughtest me to the haven where I would be, and hast now returned me home in safety.

[b] Heb. vi. 19, 20. [c] Ps. xlviii. 1. [d] xxxiii. 6, 7. [e] cxxxv. 6. [f] cvii. 24, 25, 28, 29.

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O God! that I may never forget the vows which I was forward to make when I was in trouble, preserve in me for ever an awful sense and apprehension of thy great power, who *bringest the wind out of thy treasuries*[e]; *and rulest the raging of the sea, and stillest the noise of its waves*[f]. *Who would not fear thee, O Lord? who would not tremble at thy presence, who hast placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it? and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it*[g].

O possess my heart with a greater reverence of thy divine Majesty, that I may ever *serve thee with fear, and rejoice before thee with trembling*[h]. Especially make me fearful of offending thee, who art so great and powerful, and hast done such great things for me, and canst do greater; and wilt do them, as thou hast promised, by Christ Jesus, who hath *power to subdue all things to himself*[i].

Blessed be thy infinite grace, which hast wrought such a marvellous redemption for us by him. *How shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation*[j]? How miserable shall I be, if, after all the dangers from which I have now been rescued, I should for my ingratitude and disobedience be *cast into the lake of fire and brimstone?* O God, that all thy mercies and deliverances here may, by a thankful remembrance and careful improvement of them, only prepare me for that glorious deliverance at the day of the Lord Jesus! and as by thy good providence thou hast saved me from the violence of storms and tempests, and other hazards, so by thy grace deliver me from the power and violence of all temptations; and enable me steadfastly to persist in welldoing, and patient suffering unto the end!

Endue me with such a right sense of my religion, as may make it to be my delight; that so I may be out of all danger of being prevailed withal to forsake that which is so sweet and pleasant to my soul. O that it may be my guide in prosperity, and my comfort in adversity; the rule of my life, and my great satisfaction in death. Sanctify every condition unto me, that sickness or health, poverty or riches, honour or disgrace, may

[e] Ps. cxxxv. 7. [f] lxxxix. 9. [g] Jer. v. 22.
[h] Ps. ii. 11. [i] Philipp. iii. 21. [j] Heb. ii. 3.

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prove real blessings to me, and make me profit in piety and virtue. And let a great sense of thee and of religion intermix itself with all my employments. Teach me so to behave myself that I may be acceptable in thy sight, not only when I make such addresses as these unto thee, but whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do else, I may abide in thy love and be approved by thee for a good and faithful servant.

All which I most humbly beg of thee, and whatsoever thou seest good for me, in the name of the Lord Jesus; by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end.

A prayer in a storm[k].

O God, who hast bid us in the day of trouble to call on thee, to whom alone *belong the issues from death*[l]: I flee to thee for protection and safety in this great and dreadful distress. The sea roars, and the deep is ready to swallow me up. *The floods, O Lord, are lifted up, the floods lift up their waves. But the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea*[m].

To thy almighty love I commit myself, who canst immediately rebuke the winds and the sea, and turn this storm into a calm. I have justly deserved, I know, to be cast away and rejected by thee, upon whom I now cast myself for safety. But I hope thou wilt accept of my unfeigned sorrow for all my sins, and my unfeigned purpose to forsake them. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, I most humbly beseech thee, O most merciful Father, for Jesus Christ his sake, who *descended into the lower parts of the earth* for me, and is now *ascended far above all heavens*, to succour those that call upon thee in his name. For his sake spare me at least from going down into utter darkness; and if it be thy will, from perishing here in the deep waters. O give me the comfort of thy mercy, that, though the sea rages, my heart may be quiet and still.

And as I desire to be preserved from this present danger, so I earnestly desire thou wilt preserve in me hereafter a pious dread

[k] [This prayer and the two following were inserted in the later editions.]

[l] [Ps. lxviii. 20.]

[m] [Ps. xciii. 3, 4.]

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of thy divine Majesty, the least expression of whose displeasure I see in this tempest is exceeding full of terror. Awaken my soul perpetually by the thoughts of it to live a more sober, righteous and godly life: that being saved from death, I may never forget thy loving-kindness, but study as long as ever I live to show myself truly thankful to thee, by sincere and careful obedience, through our Lord Jesus. To whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be eternal praises. Amen.

A thanksgiving after a storm.

Glory, honour, thanksgiving and praise be unto thee, O God my Saviour, and my mighty Deliverer. Thou art worthy of all my love and all my service, of more than I can be ever able to render to thee, who hast made me and redeemed me, and now graciously preserved me. What shall I return unto thee for all the benefits thou hast heaped on me? I can never thank thee, never love thee enough for those which I have formerly received; and yet *thou hast now put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto my God* [k].

For *if the Lord had not been with me, I must needs acknowledge, if it had not been the Lord who protected me, when the sea rose up against me; then it had swallowed me up quick, when it swelled and raged horribly against me. Then the waters had overwhelmed me, the streams had gone over my soul: then the proud waters had gone over my soul* [l]. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not cast me out of his sight, nor suffered *all his billows and waves to pass over me. I have escaped the stormy wind and tempest, the storm is ceased, and I am escaped. I will sacrifice to thee therefore the voice of thanksgiving. I will pay that which I have vowed* [m]. *Salvation is of the Lord: our help is in the Lord, who made the heaven and the earth* [n].

Let the remembrance of thy mercy never slip out of my mind. And make me as mindful of my own promises, as forward to every part of my duty, and cheerful in the performance of it, that so I may be able to trust in thee at all times. When my soul is ready to faint within me, help me to remem-

[k] Ps. xl. 3. [l] cxxiv. 1–5. [m] Jonah ii. 2, 3, 4, 7, 9. [n] [Ps. cxxiv. 8.]

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ber thee, O Lord; and always study to walk before thee, as thy every way redeemed one: who desires that all those who have been partakers in the same deliverance may all express the same thankfulness, and *pay thee the vows which their lips have uttered when they were in trouble*[o].

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together[p].

Let us sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing[q].

For his merciful kindness is great towards us: and his truth endureth for ever. Praise the Lord[r]. Amen. Amen.

A prayer in time of great thunder and lightning.

O great God, who art *wise in heart and mighty in strength; who removest the mountains, and overturnest them in thine anger; who shakest the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; who dost great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number*[s]: I prostrate myself in awful adorations of thee. For *the voice of the Lord is very powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord rends the air, and sends out flames of fire*[t].

Who would not fear thee, *O God of glory?* who would not stand in awe of thee? who canst instantly, I see, *tear us in pieces, and none can deliver us*[u]. It is of thy mere mercy that the *arrows thou now sendest out do not scatter us*[v]: and that thou dost not *shoot out lightnings to discomfit us*[x]. Blessed be thy goodness that we are not utterly consumed by *the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.* O that thy sparing mercy may sensibly affect my heart, and move me hereafter to *serve thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear:* remembering that *our God is a consuming fire*[y].

Settle in my heart an holy dread of thee, that as I now tremble at thy voice, so I may always *tremble at thy word:* and not dare to offend thee, who wilt send thy Son, I know, one day (in a far more terrible manner than this) *with thy mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know*

[o Ps. lxvi. 14.] [p [xxxiv. 3.] [q [cvii. 22.] [r [cxvii. 2.]
[s Job ix. 4, 5, 6, &c. [t Ps. xxix. 4, 7. [u l. 22. [v xviii. 14.
[x cxliv. 6. [y Heb. xii. 28, 29.

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not thee, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ [t]. O that my heart may be possessed now with such a constant fear of thee, and such an ardent love and devotion to thee, that at that dreadful day, when heaven and earth shall quake, I may be able, with a good hope in thee, joyfully to expect a comfortable sentence from thee. That when the wicked shall hear that voice (more terrible than any thunder), *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, I may be in the number of those happy souls to whom our Lord will say, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* [u].

Which I humbly beg for his sake, under whose feet thou hast put all things in subjection, both in heaven and earth. To him with thyself and the Holy Spirit be given, as is most due, all honour and glory, all service and humble obedience, both now and evermore. Amen.

A prayer to be used by a woman with child.

O God, the author of our being, the fountain of life, and all other good, who hast begun an excellent work in me, which no eye but thine sees, and no hand but thy almighty power can finish: I adore thy great and glorious Majesty in this and in all other thy works of wonder. *Thou dost great things without number* [v]; but art more particularly to be acknowledged in the formation of mankind, who *are fearfully and wonderfully made* [x], after thine own image and likeness.

Be pleased, O Lord, in thy infinite goodness to perfect and complete that which thou hast begun. Preserve the smallest degree of life which thou hast inspired. Bestow upon it entireness of all its parts; and prepare a convenient habitation for an understanding spirit, capable of the best wisdom, and inclinable to virtue and goodness. Prevent, good Lord, the miscarriage of my hopes, and ripen them to a good issue. And the nearer they come to their full growth, strengthen the more my humble trust in thee, and submission to thee, and hearty desires to increase the number of thy faithful people together with my own family.

[t] 2 Thess. i. 8. [u] Matt. xxv. 34, 41.] [v] [Job ix. 10.] [x] [Ps. cxxxix. 14.]

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That ought to be the chiefest desire of my soul, to be formed myself in all things according to the mind and will of thee, my God; that so I may be an instrument of doing good to others. O thou who hast wrought many holy purposes and resolutions in my heart, preserve and confirm them, that they may not prove abortive; but bring forth continually the fruit of good living. Perfect me in knowledge, in faith, in love, and in obedience. Enable me so discreetly and carefully to discharge the duties of all the relations wherein I at present, or shall hereafter, stand; that I may be a comfort to them, and a credit to religion. And howsoever thou disposest of me or them, Lord, make me well contented; and in every condition to give thanks unto thee, and to rejoice in thy holy name, and in the hope of eternal life; through Christ Jesus, my most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

A prayer when the time of her travail draweth near.

O God, the helper and deliverer of all those that trust in thee, by whose power I was formed in my mother's womb, by whose care I was brought from thence, and by whose merciful kindness I have been preserved in many dangers since: I praise and magnify thy great and glorious name; and am encouraged by the remembrance of thy mercies, which have been ever of old, to implore thy compassionate help in the approaching time of my need, pain and danger.

Thou art present to all thy creatures, and hearest the cries of the beasts of the earth, which all wait upon thee. O be not far from me when trouble is near; but hearken unto me, and save me, when I call upon thee. Shorten my pains, or lengthen my patience, which thou pleasest. Bear up my spirit in submission to thy will, and in some humble hope that I *shall forget my anguish for joy that a man is born into the world*[a]. *Forsake not the work of thy own hand*[b]; but in due time perfect it, and bring forth that which thou hast wrought in secret into the light: that we may all see the wonders of thy wisdom, and praise thy goodness and thy power.

My parents trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they

[a] John xvi. 21. [b] Ps. cxxxviii. 8.

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cried unto thee, and were not confounded[b]. In thee likewise do I humbly put my trust and confidence: which nothing disheartens but my own great unworthiness; by reason of my forgetfulness of thy benefits, and unthankful returns for former mercies bestowed upon me. But thou hast taken care that this should not discourage me neither, by proclaiming a gracious pardon by him that was born of a woman, and died for us, unto contrite and reforming sinners.

Accept, I beseech thee, of my sincere resolutions to preserve hereafter a more affectionate remembrance of thy love to me, and to dedicate myself and all I have to thy service, *in faith and charity, and holiness, with sobriety*[c]. Or if thou art pleased otherwise to dispose of me, I resign myself heartily unto thee. Lord, receive me to a better life, where all sighing and sorrow shall be done away, and eternal joy entirely possess our hearts. Amen, for Christ Jesus his sake, Amen.

A prayer to the same purpose to be said by her relations.

O most mighty Lord, who hast already given us innumerable pledges of thy love, and many arguments to trust in thee for ever, and to expect with quiet and patient minds the issue of thy wise and good Providence: thou hast respect to all the works of thy hands; especially to the sons of men, and to those above the rest who seek thy favour, and give thee the glory of all thy mercies, and are resolved to devote themselves and their children and all they have, to do thee honour in the world. We most humbly commend thy servant, drawing near the time of her travail, to thy care and blessing; beseeching thee to give her a gracious deliverance, and to ease her of the burden wherewith she labours.

We ourselves are monuments of that mercy which we beg of thee. Thou broughtest us into this world, and didst unloose the bands wherewith we were swaddled in our mother's womb. We have had long experience also of thy readiness to succour us, and to do us good ever since; many times beyond our desires and hopes, and always beyond our deservings. We dare not but commit ourselves, and every thing belonging unto us, most heartily into thy hands; remembering that thou hast the same

[b] Ps. xxii. 4, 5. [c] 1 Tim. ii. 15.

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power and goodness still, by which we came into the light of the living; and that thou still exercisest them, as thy wisdom thinks most meet.

We cannot desire to be better provided for, than as thy infinite understanding and counsel judges most convenient for us. Unto that we refer ourselves; beseeching thee, if it be thy good pleasure, that her deliverance may be as speedy as her cries unto thee, and her patience as great and long as her pains. Thou who ripenest the fruits of the earth, and then givest us to gather them to our comfort, blast not our humble hopes of the fruit of the womb: but, after thou hast brought it to maturity, deliver it into our hands, as a new pledge of thy goodness to us; for which we will ever thankfully acknowledge and praise thy name.

Or if thou hast otherwise determined, Lord, give us grace to submit to thy holy will, and to rest satisfied in thy wise appointments, and never to distrust thy goodness and care over us. Yea, help us still to bless thee, and to speak good of thy name, saying, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*[d] from henceforth and for ever. Amen.

A prayer to be said by them when she is actually in travail[e].

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need: we flee to thee for succour in behalf of this thy servant, who now expects thy mercy in this her great distress. The sorrows which thou threatenedst to our first parent are come upon her; the pangs of travail have taken hold of her. May it please thee, O Lord, to give her ease, by being her speedy deliverer.

As thou hast made her conceive, and hast now brought to the birth; so give her strength also to bring forth. Support her spirits in her labour. Bless the endeavours of those who are to assist her. Preserve that infant life which struggles in her womb to be delivered, and let us see the work of thy hands to all our joy and comfort.

O blessed Jesus, who thyself wast born of a woman, make haste to help her. Be with her in her agony. Enable her

[d] [Job i. 21.] [e] [This prayer did not form part of the first edition.]

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patiently to bear her pain; and humbly to depend on thy goodness for safety and salvation. And if it seem good to thee, shorten her labour, and make her the joyful mother of a child; to succeed in our place to love and serve thee, the Saviour of men. Amen.

"Lord, hear our prayer: and let our cry come unto thee."

Arise, and help her, and deliver her for thy mercies' sake[d].

"O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and passion hast redeemed us, save her and help her, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord[e]."

A thanksgiving to be used by those present after her safe deliverance.

We thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for thy long-continued goodness to us thy creatures, who are unworthy of the least of thy favours. *In thee we live and move, and have our being*[f]. And it is only of thy mercy that we have not lived in perpetual pain and torment, spending our days in sighs and lamentations; but have enjoyed much health and ease, and had innumerable occasions to praise thee and to rejoice in thee; *who loadest us daily with thy benefits.* Blessed be thy name, O Lord, *who forgivest all our iniquities, and healest all our diseases; who redeemest our life from destruction, and crownest us with loving-kindness and tender mercies*[g]. More particularly we thank thee, that thou hast heard the humble supplications of this thy servant; to whom thou hast now granted a gracious deliverance, and turned her sorrow and heaviness into joy and gladness. We thank thee that thou hast sent her seasonable helpers, and blessed their endeavours for the preservation of her, and of the fruit of her womb. And that thou likewise vouchsafest her all needful things for her refreshment in this weak condition wherein she lies; waiting upon thee for the perfection of thy mercies towards her.

Accept, we beseech thee, of our hearty acknowledgments of thy powerful and good providence over her, and over any per-

[d] Ps. xliv. ult.

[e] [Service for the Visitation of the Sick.] These sentences may be often repeated.

[f] [Acts xvii. 28.]

[g] [Ps. ciii. 2, 3, 4.]

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son here present in the like necessity; which we now thankfully call to mind, and desire may never be forgotten. O that a lively remembrance of this and all other thy mercies may so mightily affect our hearts, that we may be moved thereby to fear thee all our days, and to love thee, and to put our trust in thee, and with quiet and resigned minds to cast all our burdens and cares on thee, in a constant and cheerful obedience to all thy holy commands.

And since thou hast begun to be so gracious to this thy handmaid, grant unto her and her relations further favour; *and finish their life in health, with joy and mercy*[h]. Renew her strength daily; and as that increaseth, so make her thankfulness and pious affections towards thee, and serious resolutions to obey thee faithfully, grow up together therewith.

Refresh her spirit, while she lieth on this bed of weakness, with many heavenly thoughts and delightful meditations of all thy mercies towards her, and towards mankind; especially with a sense of thy wonderful love in Christ Jesus, who was pleased to be born of a woman, and to become like one of us, that we might be assured of thy care over us in every condition, and be made thy children and at last the heirs of everlasting life. And when she hath recovered her former strength, make her to feel this love still more powerful in her heart; exciting her to serve thee carefully in all righteousness, sobriety, modesty, devotion and readiness to assist others, especially the poor and needy, in the same distress wherein she hath been herself.

We commend likewise this little one, which thou hast blessed her withal, unto thy tender care and fatherly love: beseeching thee that it may live to be dedicated unto thee, and to be instructed in the knowledge of thee, and to praise thee, as we now do, for bringing it into the world, and for making it partaker likewise of thy grace in Christ Jesus. Or if it shall seem good to thee to let either of them fall into any further danger, enable her to endure it with patient submission to thee: trusting, even in death itself, in thy good providence, and in thy precious promises, who never failest those that faithfully seek thee.

Hear us, O Father of mercies, and pardon our offences; pity our infirmities; make us more thankful for what we have

[h] Tobit viii. 17.

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received, and more fit for thy future mercies, either in this life or in the next, through thy infinite love declared to us in Christ Jesus: in whose holy word we conclude our prayers, saying, as he hath taught us,

Our Father, &c.

A thanksgiving to be used by the person herself when she is able.

Unto thee, O God, do I give thanks, unto thee do I give thanks: for that thou art near, thy wondrous works declare[f]. *In my distress I called upon thee, and my cry came unto thee*[g]. *I have sought thee, O Lord, and thou heardest me, and deliveredst me from all my fears*[h]. *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul*[i]. *Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit*[k]. *Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me*[l]. Blessed be God, who hath preserved the fruit of my womb, and made me the joyful mother of a child. *Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praise unto thee*[m]. *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord*[n].

Accept, O most merciful Father, of these thankful acknowledgments, *which go not forth out of feigned lips*[o]. And be pleased graciously to preserve such a lasting and fresh remembrance of thy great mercies in my heart, that I may always be joyful in thee, and speak good of thy name, and trust in thee at all times, and still *cry unto thee, O God most High, who performest all things for me*[p]. Make me studious likewise, and forward to bring forth all the fruits of righteousness throughout the whole course of my life; which may witness the truth and sincerity of my thankfulness to thee.

O that I may never be less earnest and fervent in the return of obedience than I have been in desires and prayers to receive

[f] Ps. lxxv. 1. [g] xviii. 6. [h] xxxiv. 4. [i] cxxxviii. 3. [k] xxx. 3. [l] lxvi. 20. [m] lvi. 12. [n] civ. 33, 34. [o] xvii. 1. [p] lvii. 2.

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thy blessing! Dispose me to have a kind and tender care of this infant, which thou hast committed to my charge. Make me willing to undergo, to the utmost of my power, the pains that accompany its education. Let not the love of ease and pleasure breed in me an averseness to any duty to which both nature and religion incline me: or give me grace, by sober thoughts, and a thankful remembrance of the late pain, from which thou hast delivered me, to overcome it.

Especially endue me with the greatest love to its precious and immortal soul, and help me so to grow and increase in Christian wisdom and goodness, that I may be able to instruct it, when it is capable, in the fear of our Lord; and by meek and gentle admonitions, together with a good example in all things, to win it to the love of true godliness. Or if thou art pleased to take it from me, who deserve not the least of thy mercies, Lord, so moderate my affections, and bring them in subjection to thee, that I may not undutifully repine at thy providence, but in an humble adoration of thy unsearchable wisdom, and a steadfast confidence of thy good will towards me, resign it unto thee, from whom I received it.

And I also beseech thy divine goodness, when thou shalt restore me to the public assemblies of thy people again, to give me grace to receive that mercy with exceeding joy. Prepare my heart with an enlarged affection to offer unto thee not only the sacrifice of praise, giving thanks unto thy name, but all other oblations which ought to accompany such addresses to thy glorious Majesty; that they may be but an earnest of my future diligence and zeal in thy divine service, and of my readiness to do good, and communicate unto others; whereby I may *lay up in store for myself a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold on eternal life*[q], through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A prayer for good success in some extraordinary business.

Almighty and most merciful Father, the supreme Governor of the whole world: who disposest and orderest all things in heaven and earth with admirable judgment, and canst not pos-

[q] 1 Tim. vi. 19.

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sibly err in what thou doest, nor fail of what thou designest: I adore, in the humblest reverence of my soul, thy most glorious Majesty, thy eternal power, holiness, goodness, and truth, which are all beyond my comprehension. And more particularly I adore thy unspotted justice and all-seeing wisdom, which penetrates into the deepest secrets, and spies out all the ways of the sons of men, and renders to every one of them according to their doings.

I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps[r]. The success of all our counsels and actions depends on thy pleasure; and when we have *devised the way*[s] we intend to go, thou givest it what issue seems good in thine eyes. *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless thy counsel, O Lord, that shall stand*[t]. I will therefore *bless thee, O Lord God, alway, and desire of thee that my ways may be directed, and that all my paths and counsels may prosper: for thou thyself givest all good things, and thou humblest whom thou wilt, and as thou wilt*[u].

Accordingly, I now most earnestly recommend myself and all my concerns to thee, who hast bid me *in all my ways acknowledge thee, and thou wilt direct my paths. I trust* in thy wise and good providence *with all my heart, and lean not unto mine own understanding*[x]. I hope in thy mercy that thou wilt so direct, assist, and prosper all my thoughts, designs, and endeavours, that they may attain their desired end.

And above all things, I desire that I may have grace to design and seek for nothing but what is just and honest, pious and charitable, praiseworthy, and of good report. Bless me, good Lord, with that integrity of heart, in which thou so much delightest; and then bless me with wisdom and good understanding in all my affairs, that *I may guide them with discretion.* For *it is thou that leadest into wisdom, and directest the wise*[y]. *In thy hand are both we and our words: all wisdom also and knowledge of workmanship*[z]. Leave me not therefore, *O Lord, Father and Governor of all my whole life,* leave me not to myself alone, but *send out thy wisdom*

[r] Jer. x. 23. [s] Prov. xvi. 9. [t] xix. 21. [u] Tob. iv. 19.
[x] Prov. iii. 5, 6. [y] Wisd. vii. 15, 16. [z] vii. 10.

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from the throne of thy glory, that being present she may labour with me: and turn away from me vain hopes[a]. Endue me also with a patient, contented, and untroubled spirit, that I may wait on thee as long as thou pleasest; and whatsoever the event shall be, enable me to rejoice in thee as my portion, and to rest perfectly satisfied in thy love, and in the assured hope of good things in the other world.

I humbly recommend likewise to thy merciful guidance all those with whom I have entrusted any of my concerns, that they may manage all their undertakings with skill and prudence, justice and fidelity; and do for me, as they would that I or others should do for them. Make us all ever mindful that *all our works are as the sun before thee, and thy eyes are continually upon our ways*[b], that we may never dare to do anything but what thou approvest, and of which we may give a comfortable account at the great day of judgment.

Now unto him that is of power to do for me exceeding abundantly above all that I ask or think, to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen[c].

A prayer when one intends to live unmarried.

O Lord, the lover of souls, for whom they were made, and in whom alone they can be happy: *there is none I have in heaven but thee, nor on earth that I desire besides thee*[d]: who art the perfection of wisdom, power, and goodness, and the fountain of all the good that is in us. Thou art able to raise us to what degree of wisdom, strength, and goodness thou pleasest; and hast promised us thine assistance to make us like unto thee; and assured us we shall be immortally blessed by a glorious participation of thee. Thou drawest us so mightily that we have no power to resist thee, when our minds turn themselves towards thee, and reflect upon thy most excellent nature, which discovers itself in all thy bounty to us and the rest of thy creatures.

We cannot but love thee when we think of thee; and when

[a] Ecclus. xxiii. 1, 5. [b] Ecclus. xvii. 19. [c] Eph. iii. 20. Rom. xvi. 25, 27. [d] Ps. lxxiii. 25.

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we love thee, we cannot but again think of thee, that we may have the pleasure still of loving thee more. O fix my mind, I beseech thee, in a more steadfast contemplation of this, and of all thy gracious communications to me, that I may spend my days delightfully in a perpetual meditation of thy mercies, which I have received in such abundance from thee!

There is nothing I know more natural and more easy than to think of the kindnesses of those that love us, especially their's to whom we bear a mutual love. O how great, how free and undeserved is thy love to us! What infinite reason is there that we should love thee with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength! Inspire me, O God, with such a lively sense of thy goodness in my creation, and ever since, both to my soul and to my body, that I may ever preserve a sweet and grateful remembrance of it; and may feel it provoking me daily to commemorate thy loving-kindness with the most ardent love of thee, my most bountiful Benefactor. O that I could love thee in everything that I see and enjoy! being led by it to the thoughts of thy admirable wisdom, which astonishes us in the least of thy creatures; and of thy matchless goodness, which hath provided such variety of pleasures for all our senses.

Possess me with a great and strong admiration of the excellency of wisdom, that I may *be a lover of her beauty, and seek her out from my youth; desiring to marry her to myself. For thou the Lord of all things thyself lovest her: and therefore I purpose to take her to live with me; knowing that she will be a counsellor of good things, and a comfort in cares and grief*[d]. But especially overpower my heart with a strong and lasting sense of thy exceeding abundant kindness in Christ Jesus; *in whom thou hast chosen me, that I shall be holy, and without blame before thee in love*[e]. Let me never think of that, but with such great transports of love and joy, and thankfulness unto thee, as may make me then forget all other things; and make me to understand more and more how thy love in him *hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.* That so I may be the more moved to admire it, and delight to meditate upon it, and be still searching into those treasures of

[d] Wisd. viii. 2, 3, 9. [e] Ephes. i. 4, 8.

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thy wisdom, and unsearchable riches of thy grace, till I come *to be filled with all the fulness of thee*[f], my God.

Translate all my affections from these lower objects to him that is *fairer than the children of men*[g]; who loved me so much as to die for me; who is risen again, and sits at thy right hand in incomparable majesty and glory. Raise up my thoughts as high as that heavenly place where he is, and where I hope one day to be; *equal to the angels, who neither marry nor are given in marriage*[h]. Help me to begin that happy state in separating myself frequently from all this world, and joining with that blessed company above in praising thee, and giving thanks unto thee; whose mercies are great, and endure for ever.

And when I am about any other employment, help me cheerfully to attend it; and with a willing mind to perform the duties belonging to it. Possess me with such an hatred of idleness and sloth, that I may always be busied about some good or innocent thing. Especially dispose me to exercise myself in works of mercy and charity; and to take all opportunities of doing good to the bodies or souls of my neighbours.

Endue me with prudence and discretion in the choice of my company and friends; and give me wisdom to improve their society to the best purposes. Make my mind more heavenly: and when any thoughts contrary to my inclinations and resolutions arise in me, turn them immediately to thyself and my blessed Saviour. Open my eyes to behold the things that are not seen: and put out the splendour of all those things that dazzle our eyes here, by the appearance of a brighter and more glorious good: which may raise my designs higher than this world; and make all my passions and affections more equal and moderate; my discourse more profitable; my behaviour more humble, modest, and such as becometh saints; and all my actions more conformable to thy will, and more exemplary to those whom I converse withal. *The very God of peace sanctify me wholly, and preserve my whole spirit, and soul, and body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*[i].

O that my love to any thing here may not turn into wantonness and folly; nor my joy and cheerfulness into lightness

[f] Ephes. iii. 19. [g] Ps. xlv. 2. [h] Luke xx. 36. [i] 1 Thess. v. 23.

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and vanity; nor my seriousness or sorrow into melancholy and discontent; nor my just anger into hatred and contention; nor industry in my business into carefulness, distrust and earthliness of mind; nor my discretion and prudence into craft, dissembling and deceit!

Dispose my heart that I may so mind heavenly things, as to be very humble and lowly in my own eyes; and be so humble and sensible of my own unworthiness and weakness, as to make my addresses to thee continually, with the greater earnestness, for thy merciful help and supply. Teach me so to pray and call upon thee, as to labour and strive myself, and so to labour and run that I may obtain. Let faith in thy good providence and precious promises be my comfort; and hope of thy glory make me rejoice, and a great love to thee make me unwearied, and fill me with the consolations of the Holy Ghost. O that my religion may become my nature, so that it may not be my burden or trouble; and help me so to look upon it as my duty, as withal to account it my honour, privilege and happiness.

O that I may never desire any thing but to be so pure as thou wouldest have me; and to enjoy those rewards of holiness which thou canst and wilt bestow upon me. This is the sum of my desires: that whatsoever I do may please thee, and whatsoever thou dost may be pleasing to me. Lord, hear me, and answer me graciously. And if I shall see any cause hereafter to change my condition, preserve in me an unchangeable love to thee above all things: that still I may please thee, and be acceptable in thy sight; delighting myself in wisdom, and *reposing myself with her, for her conversation hath no bitterness, and to live with her hath no sorrow, but mirth and joy*[k]. In which happiness the Lord vouchsafe to keep me, whatever my condition be, for Jesus his sake, to whom with thee, O Father, and thy blessed Spirit, be everlasting praises. Amen.

A shorter to be added at any time to other devotions.

O blessed Jesus, who camest down from heaven in the most familiar manner to us, and keptst thyself unspotted from the world while thou hadst the most free conversation in it; I commend myself to thy gracious protection, guidance and blessing:

[k] Wisdom viii. 16.

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beseeching thee to preserve me *holy both in body and spirit,* while I live among men, and am not retired from them.

I desire chiefly to *care for those things that belong to thee our Lord, how I may please thee and attend upon thee without distraction*[l]. Favour therefore, I humbly entreat thee, these pious inclinations. I know how weak our nature is; and therefore the more earnestly desire thee to keep my heart steadfast in this purpose, if thou seest it best for me. Help me to employ my thoughts cheerfully and constantly in heavenly things. Fill me with great devotion to thee; that when I am employed in other affairs, and am in other company, they may not draw my heart too strongly to them; but I may still remain fixed in what I have decreed: to be freed from all other cares, that I may more entirely serve thee.

Give thy holy angels a special charge of me: let thy blessed Spirit powerfully assist me: turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity: incline me alway to *adorn myself in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety*[m]; studying rather to approve myself to thee in good works, than to appear beautiful before men.

Be thou my love, my satisfaction, my joy, my heart's delight. Never absent thyself from me, nor leave me to follow any of my own passions; but conduct me pure and undefiled to the company of those blessed virgins and holy ones, who reign with thee for ever. Amen, Lord Jesus.

I pray God my whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ[n].

A prayer when there are any thoughts of changing that condition, and deliberations about marriage.

O Lord, my most gracious and merciful Father, of whose tender care and good Providence I have had so long and abundant experience, that I should be extremely ungrateful if I should not acknowledge thee, and love thee, and trust in thee, and upon all occasions call upon thee, and seek thy favour for ever: there hath no day passed since I came into the world, but it hath brought along with it many tokens of thy love, which thou art still renewing in every moment of my life.

[l] 1 Cor. vii. 32, 34, 35. [m] 1 Tim. ii. 9. [n] 1 Thess. v. 23.

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By thee I have been carried through all the dangers of infancy and childhood, unto this age of understanding and reason. And thou hast blessed me many ways since that time; especially with some remembrance and sense of thyself, from whom I came, and on whom I depend; which I account the greatest benefit of all. Blessed be thy goodness that I am not a perfect stranger to thee; but that thou hast made me to know something of thee, and of thy infinite goodness; who alone art able to make me happy, both here and eternally.

I hope in thee, O my God, that thou wilt never forsake me; but be my guide even unto death. Pardon, I beseech thee, all the sins and negligences of which I have been at any time guilty; and let them not hinder the continuance of thy mercy and favour towards me, on which all the comfort of my life depends. Leave me not to myself and the weakness of my own counsels; especially now in the greatest turn and change of my life: but vouchsafe to direct my thoughts and all the motions of my heart aright, to that which will be most profitable for me and conduce every way to my future comfort and satisfaction.

Lead me in the way wherein I shall go, and guide me for thy name's sake: endue me with such a serious, considerate and discerning spirit, that I may not follow the enticements of any fading and perishing good; but cleave to that which is unchangeable, and never dies. *Favour*, thou hast taught me, *is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but one that feareth the Lord shall be praised* [o]. O possess my heart with an holy fear of thee, that nothing may appear so amiable in my eyes as true religion, piety and virtue! Make me in love with the beauties of wisdom (*for thou lovest none but him that dwelleth with wisdom, to be allied unto which is immortality; and great pleasure I know it is to have her friendship* [p]), and with the beauties of sobriety, meekness, mercifulness, humility, and all those things which are the image of thy goodness: that being inclined by these in my choice, I may find a fit person to be the guide of my youth [*or an help meet for me*] the delight of mine eyes; in whose society I may enjoy a constant relief, ease and pleasure, and be set forward thereby in the way to heaven.

[o] Prov. xxxi. 30. [p] Wisdom vii. 28; viii. 17, 18.

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Assist me, I beseech thee, in all my deliberations about this change; that I may soberly weigh every thing which is offered to my thoughts. And after all the dangers which by thy goodness I have escaped, I may not be so unhappy now as to fall into the saddest of all; by the strength of fancy, by rashness and unadvisedness of mind, or the violence and unruliness of any passion: but may dispose of my affections to a person worthy of them. Help me, blessed Lord, to make so wise a choice that I may never repent of it afterward.

Direct and govern likewise the minds and hearts of all those [parents or friends] that transact anything on my behalf. That they may have a respect chiefly to those things which endure for ever; and settle me there, where I may most glorify thee, and do most good, and increase in wisdom and virtue, and live in peace, cheerfulness and contentment to the end of my days. Which mercies, and all others that thou seest requisite for me, I most humbly beg of thee for Jesus Christ his sake, the Lord of peace; to whom, with thyself and good Spirit, I desire to give, as is most due, eternal praises. Amen.

A prayer when a person is about to enter into the state of marriage; [and may serve for any other new condition of life.]

O Lord, the guide and director, the helper and comforter of all those that seek thee and depend upon thee with their whole heart: in a serious sense that nothing can make me happy without thy love, favour and blessing, I humbly cast down myself before thy divine Majesty, imploring thy gracious presence with me, to instruct, govern and assist me in that condition into which, under the conduct and protection of thy good providence, I am about to enter.

Great and many have been thy mercies towards me hitherto, ever since I was taken by thee out of my mother's womb. Thou hast nourished and clothed me, thou hast brought me up to some knowledge of thee, and of the duty I owe thee: thou hast shown me the path of life, and prevented me early with thy grace to dispose my heart to walk in it. And though I have not made, I most sorrowfully confess, such returns unto thee as I ought to have done, yet it is some comfort to me to

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feel my heart inclined and resolved to be more thankful and dutiful hereafter, and to pass the remaining part of my sojourning here in thy fear and love, and steadfast obedience.

Pardon me therefore, O most merciful Father, according to thy promises made in Christ Jesus to penitent sinners, and vouchsafe me the grace of thy Holy Spirit to lead me to a clear and full understanding of all the duties that belong to the state and relations in which I have now chosen to serve thee. Endue me with a sincere and hearty affection to them; and enable me carefully to perform them with a willing mind and a cheerful unwearied spirit as long as thou thinkest fit to continue me in that condition of life. Bless me with a wise and observant heart, to discern and mark the nature and dispositions of those to whom I shall be joined in any bonds of love or duty: that I may delight to please them to the utmost of my power, and study their content and satisfaction; and bear with their infirmities, and choose the fittest opportunities to do them good and amend what is amiss in them.

Free us all who shall stand related to each other from all peevishness and unreasonable passions: let no mistake or causeless jealousy spoil the entireness of our affection; endue us with great purity of heart, and a chaste conversation; and bestow upon us such meek, sweet and compliant dispositions, that this may not prove a state of temptation and sorrow, but of godliness and holiness, to our mutual joy and happiness.

Make us ever mindful of the covenant wherein we stand engaged to each other, especially of that sacred vow wherein we stand bound to thee, by our being baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, that we may faithfully keep and perform it. Tie us so fast together in unity of spirit, that we may have the same common cares, and bear one another's burdens, and endeavour to increase each other's joys, and lighten each other's sorrows: and in all the changes and alterations of our condition we may religiously preserve an immutable love unto and delight in each other to the end of our days.

Especially help us to stir up one another to the love of thee and our blessed Saviour, and to do all good offices to our neighbours; that after we have enjoyed the comfort of a sweet society, and been a blessing to all that are near unto us, we

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may finally part in peace, and rest in a good hope to dwell together for ever, in happy friendship with thee, and with our Lord and all the holy ones. Amen. Amen.

A prayer of parents for their children when they are grown up to some understanding.

We humbly worship thy glorious Majesty, O Lord most high; we acknowledge thy infinite goodness, that thou art pleased to give us leave to call thee Father, who art the Possessor of heaven and of earth. We thank thee for thy most tender care over us ever since we were born. More especially for the knowledge thou hast given us of thy great love in Jesus Christ, and that thou hast so timely prevented us with thy grace, and inclined our hearts to thy fear, and love, and service.

Vouchsafe, we beseech thee, O most merciful Father, to take our children also (which we have already dedicated unto thee, and commended to thy care) into the protection and guidance of the same gracious providence which hath been so watchful over us. Thou knowest the great weakness of our nature; how foolish and inconsiderate we are (especially in our younger years); how violent in our passions, how apt to listen to temptations, and easy to be seduced by them; how ready to flatter and abuse ourselves with vain hopes, and how unwilling to believe what is contrary to our desires. And therefore we the more earnestly implore thy blessing upon our endeavours, to season their minds betimes with a religious sense of thee their Creator, and of their duty which they owe thee, and of that good in which their true happiness lies.

And we beseech thee likewise to excite our hearts to the greater diligence and thoughtfulness and care, to imitate thy fatherly love towards ourselves, by watching over them to do them good, and to train them up in thy fear. Endue us with wisdom and prudence to give them wholesome and seasonable instructions; and dispose their hearts to receive and remember them. Help us to govern exactly all our affections and passions, that we may neither embolden them to anything that is evil by too much indulgence, nor discourage them in their duty by too much severity; but be examples of godliness and virtue

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to them, by a sober, grave, gentle, humble and devout behaviour and conversation.

Work in them a great reverence to all their governors, teachers, and spiritual pastors; and bless their godly admonitions to them, that they may follow and obey them. Direct us also in the choice of fit persons to assist us in their education; and in the choice of fit employments for them, whereby they may prove useful and profitable members of church and state.

Blessed be thy goodness that they have escaped the dangers of infancy and childhood. Good Lord, preserve them from all evil and mischief to which the rashness and indiscretion of youth may betray them: and fortify their minds against the power of all allurements to sin, that we may live to see them thy dutiful and obedient children, and may leave the world in hope that they will continue so unto their lives' end.

Or if thou takest us away before they come to their full age, we commend them with the more ardent affection to thy never-failing mercy and compassion. O thou who art *the Father of the fatherless*[q], be their God; and let them *find mercy with thee*[r], according to thy word. Dispose of them so, that by loving and careful governors, holy examples, innocent and good company, pious and discrete counsels, with the help of thy divine grace, they may ever be secured in their duty, and follow after us to eternal life through Christ Jesus. Amen.

A short prayer for the use of a little child.

O Lord, my most loving Saviour and merciful Redeemer, who commandest that the little children should come unto thee, and didst take them up in thine arms, lay thy hands upon them, and bless them; look graciously upon me, I humbly beseech thee, and bless me, who am one of thy children, dedicated to thy service. Pity the weakness of my tender age, and prevent me betimes with thy grace. Make me seriously to remember my Creator in the days of my youth. Endue me with the fear of my God, and make me always mindful of the vow and promise that was made in my name when I was baptized;

[q] Psalm lxviii. 5. [r] Hos. xiv. 3.

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" to forsake the devil and all his works, to believe in God and to serve him."

Make me dutiful (as thou, O Lord Jesus, wast) unto my parents [loving to my brethren and sisters], obedient to my instructors; thankful for the good counsel of my friends, humble and reverent to my betters, and meek and gentle to all men. That as I grow in years, so I may grow in wisdom and favour with thee, and with all those who are good.

Preserve me from all dangers; let thy good angels be my keepers and defenders; and guide me by thy Holy Spirit, that the longer I live the better I may be, to the comfort of my parents, the honour and glory of my God, and my own happiness here and for ever. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A shorter.

Heavenly Father, who despisest nothing that thou hast made, but takest care of the beasts of the earth and of the fowls of the air, bless me thy child, whom thou hast made in thy image, and adopted for thy own by thy grace in Christ. Preserve me this day from all evil, both in soul and body, give me what thou seest good for me; especially an heart to know thee early, to be thankful to thee, to love thee, and to do thy will as well as I am able. Bless my father and my mother, and all my friends, and make me a follower of those who are good, for the sake of my Saviour Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A prayer for the use of a child that hath lost its parents.

O Lord, who never failest those that seek thee, but *givest to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry*[s]: I cast myself upon thy infinite goodness, with whom the fatherless have been wont to find mercy. Be thou, *O Lord, Father and God of my life*[t], a most merciful and gracious Father unto me, and provide what thou seest in thy wisdom to be necessary for me.

Especially, bestow upon me some faithful friend, that will

[s] Psalm cxlvii. 9.

[t] Ecclus. xxiii. 4.

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admonish me, and take care of my soul, to bring me up religiously in the fear of thee my God. Preserve me from a distrust of thy good providence. Give me favour in the eyes of others, by an humble, submissive, and good behaviour towards them. Make me diligent and industrious in some honest calling; and bless my labours and endeavours, that I may not be a burden unto others. But whatsoever my portion be in this world, give me grace to live so piously, justly, and soberly, that I may not miss of that *incorruptible inheritance, which fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for us*[u]; through Christ Jesus. Amen.

A prayer to be used by a widow.

O God, by whose wise providence, which I humbly adore and reverence, I am left without my dearest companion and guide in this our pilgrimage, and thereby deprived of the sweetest comfort of life; behold the desolate and sorrowful estate of thy poor handmaid, who supplicates thy tender mercy and compassion towards her. Comfort me, good Lord, with a delightful sense of thy divine presence with me; and draw my heart the nearer to thee, in holy love and devout affection, and a lively hope that thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me.

I ought to thank thee at all times for the many tokens of thy love towards me; and particularly for lending me this blessing so long, the value of which I now feel by the want I am in of its support. Pardon me, I beseech thee, that I have not been so thankful for it and the rest of thy mercies as I ought, nor so carefully improved them as I might have done. *O take not away thy loving-kindness from me in displeasure;* but vouchsafe still the continuance of thy favour towards me; especially the support of thy divine grace by the power of the Holy Ghost, to enable me to bear this affliction with an humble, meek, and patient spirit.

Moderate all my passions. Free me from all discontented and distrustful thoughts. Help me to cast all my care on thee, *who relievest the fatherless and widow, and carest even for the strangers*[x]. Fix my mind upon thy love in the Lord Jesus; in whom thou wouldest have us to *rejoice always.* Lift up my

[u] 1 Pet. i. 4. [x] Ps. cxlvi. 9.

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thoughts to those heavenly enjoyments in that blessed place where he is [to which I hope my husband is departed]; and help me to follow after him with all diligence, in a pure, grave, and godly conversation; and by a careful education of my children, to endeavour that they may be also with us in that glory.

Let thy blessing ever rest upon them; and now that they are left to me alone, give me so much the more wisdom to instruct and govern them aright, and so much the more love to them, and tender affection to their good and welfare. Make them to be a comfort for me in my widowhood by their increase in godliness; that we may cheerfully serve thee together, in prayers and thanksgivings, and reading of thy holy word, and communion with our blessed Saviour, and all other actions of a Christian life. Prepare us for whatsoever condition it is into which thou shalt be pleased to bring us; that neither fulness nor poverty, honour nor reproaches, health nor sickness, may ever separate us from thy love in Christ Jesus; but we may persevere in patient obedience to thee till we receive that crown of life which he hath promised to them that love thee. Amen.

A prayer for the use of a poor servant.

O Lord most high, who art the *Maker of the rich and of the poor*[y], with whom there is no respect of persons; look graciously upon me, I humbly beseech thee, who here cast down myself before thee, acknowledging thy sovereign power over all, and thy wise providence, which hath disposed all things into several ranks and orders, for their mutual help and benefit. I humbly submit to the state and condition wherein thou hast been pleased to place me, below many other. I thank thee that I live, and that I live in health, and have strength of body, (great and invaluable blessings!) and that I have so much liberty as to make my requests unto thee, and acknowledge thy mercies; and that I have any hope thou wilt never cease to do me good till thou hast crowned all thy mercies in eternal life.

Good Lord, pardon me, if I have at any time murmured and

[y] Prov. xxii. 2.

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repined at my condition, or envied the higher estate of other persons. Pardon all my other offences, whatsoever they have been; and vouchsafe but to deliver me from the bondage of sin, and to make me a servant of righteousness, and I shall not only be contented, but perpetually rejoice in thy salvation.

Endue me with a right understanding of my duty in this relation wherein I stand; that, according to thy command, I may account those whom I serve *worthy of all honour*[z]; being careful *to please them in all things; never contradicting, nor purloining, but showing all good fidelity*[a]; *and with good-will and singleness of heart doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men*[b]. Help me to demean myself so humbly, and *whatsoever I do, to do it so heartily*[c], that I may obtain favour in their eyes. Or if they be froward, and hard to please, O God preserve me from all unseemly passions and disrespectful behaviour towards them, and make me so much the more diligent in their business; remembering that *I serve the Lord Christ*, from whom I expect to *receive the reward of the inheritance*[d].

If thou art pleased any other way to afflict me, with sickness or pains in my body, which may hinder my labour and cast me into poverty, Lord, still strengthen my faith and confidence in thee; and help to bear it with a patient mind; looking unto Jesus, who took upon him the form of a servant, and became poor, and suffered much for our sakes, but now is therefore highly exalted, to succour and comfort all those that follow after him contentedly in well-doing. In his name and words I commend myself unto thy mercy, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A countryman's prayer for fruitful seasons.

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, who *causest the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; who bringest forth food out of the earth, and blessest the springing thereof*[e]: be pleased graciously to *look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven*, upon us *thy people*[f], and upon the land wherein we dwell; that both it may become fruitful, and yield its increase; and we also may grow in all

[z] 1 Tim. vi. 1. [a] Tit. ii. 9, 10. [b] Ephes. vi. 5, 7. [c] Coloss. iii. 23. [d] Coloss. iii. 24. [e] Ps. civ. 14; lxv. 10. [f] Deut. xxvi. 15.

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wisdom and goodness, and bring forth plenteously the fruit of good works; to the honour and praise of thy name, and to our perpetual comfort, both in this world and in the world to come, through Christ Jesus our Saviour. Amen.

A prayer when the weather is unseasonable.

O God, who for our unthankfulness and abuse of thy blessings art justly displeased at us, and dost now punish us [with the want of the showers of heaven[g]], whereby we are in danger to lose the labour of our hands; be pleased to accept of our unfeigned repentance, and mercifully to forgive the sins of thy people.

Visit the earth again, and water it; make it soft with showers, and let the clouds drop fatness on it; [or, *let not the floods of water overflow us, nor the seed be rotten under the clod*[h]*:* but] as the fields now languish, *and joy is withered away from the sons of men*[i]*:* so let thy goodness *renew the face of the earth,* and make the pastures and the fields *to shout for joy and sing*[k].

Lord, hear the cry of the poor and needy. Let it suffice that we *eat our bread in the sweat of our brows*[l]*;* but do not punish us with scarcity of bread, which is the staff and support of our life. Have pity upon our perpetual labour and toil, and let us reap the fruit of it; for Jesus Christ his sake, who *was made a curse for us*[m], that we might inherit a blessing. To him, with thee, O Father of mercies, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, glory, and praise, both now and for ever. Amen.

A thanksgiving for a good harvest.

We praise thee, O God, who hast *opened to us thy good treasure, and given us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*[n]. Blessed be God for the plenty wherewith he hath loaded the earth; and for the fair weather he hath sent us, that we may gather it into our barns.

[g] Or, *with immoderate showers.*
[h] In a time of immoderate rain. Joel i. 17.
[i] Joel i. 11.
[k] Ps. civ. 30; lxv. 13.
[l] Gen. iii. 19.
[m] Gal. iii. 13.
[n] Deut. xxviii. 12. Acts xiv. 17.

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He maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains; he giveth to the beast his food; and he filleth us with the finest of the wheat[n]. *He watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater*[o].

To him therefore be the praise, for these and all other his benefits. Let all the world rejoice and be glad in him; who *prepares a table for us, and satisfies our mouths with good things, and makes our cup to run over*[p]. O that our hearts may even overflow with love and thankfulness to him! O that we may never forget nor abuse his goodness, but by a sober, charitable, and pious use of these his blessings, we may be made fit for the continual increase of them, till they all conclude in eternal life! which I most humbly crave for the sake of Christ Jesus, our blessed Lord and Saviour; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost (from whose bounteous love we receive all good things), be all honour and praise, and hearty obedience, both now and evermore. Amen.

A short prayer for the use of a judge or other magistrate.

O God, the supreme Lord and Governor of the world; *who hast made all things with thy word; and ordained man through thy wisdom, that he should have dominion over thy creatures, and order the world according to equity and righteousness, and execute judgment with an upright heart: thou hast chosen me to be a minister of thy kingdom, and a judge of thy sons and thy daughters.* But who is fit of himself alone to discharge so great a trust? *Though a man be never so perfect, yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded*[q].

I humbly therefore address myself to thee, the Father of lights, the Fountain of every good gift, *by whom princes rule, and nobles, and all judges of the earth*[r]; that thou wilt bestow upon me a wise and understanding spirit, to enable me always to discern exactly between good and evil, and to pronounce a righteous sentence in the most perplexed cases.

More especially, I beseech thee, to endue me with such an

[n] Ps. cxlvii. 8, 9, 14. [o] Is. lv. 10. [p] [Ps. xxiii. 5; ciii. 5.]
[q] Wisd. ix. 1, 2, 3, &c. [r] Prov. viii. 16.

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honest and upright mind, that nothing in the world may ever tempt me from my integrity, O that mine eyes may never be blinded by gifts, nor mine heart turn aside to follow after rewards! Let no love towards friends or hatred towards enemies, no fear of those who are mighty or desire of popular applause, in the least corrupt my judgment to decree unrighteously. But remembering thine all-seeing eye, who *standest in the congregation of the mighty, and judgest among the gods*[s], I may always proceed uprightly, and regard the person of no man in judgment.

Preserve in me, O God, this pious resolution, by preserving in me a constant sense that thou art higher than the highest, and wilt *judge all men, without any respect of persons, according to their works.* O that I may ever have the heart to dispense justice unto others with such impartiality, as I expect to find myself when I appear before thy dreadful tribunal!

Fill me with zeal and courage to punish vice and wickedness, though never so bold and befriended; and to defend and maintain thy true religion and godliness, though never so much discountenanced and deserted. That being true and faithful to the trust thou hast reposed in me, I may receive a favourable sentence from thy Majesty, when thou shalt come to judge the world in righteousness, by that great Lord whom thou hast ordained, Christ Jesus the righteous. To whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, one eternal *only wise God, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen*[t].

A prayer of a poor prisoner for debt.

O God, who art present to us in all places, and hast regard to the sighs and groans of the miserable, who humbly implore thy pity and compassion towards them; vouchsafe to look graciously upon thy afflicted servant in this place, which is most desolate and comfortless, unless the light of thy countenance shine upon me. I confess that I have too much abused the liberty which I formerly enjoyed, and did not so carefully improve as I ought to have done those happy opportunities which therewith were put into my hands. Many ways I am

[s] [Ps. lxxxii. 1.] [t] [Jude 25.]

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sensible I have offended thy divine Majesty[s], for which I am heartily sorry, and acknowledge myself infinitely indebted to thy goodness, that I am not plunged into the depth of misery to bewail my sins in the bottomless pit.

I thank thee, O Lord, with all my soul that I am not shut up in the place of outer darkness, and that I have any hope to obtain the benefit of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In whose name I beseech thee to pardon me, and likewise to sanctify these straits wherein I lie, to the freeing my soul from the bond of all iniquity, and the restoring me to the glorious liberty of thy children. Help me seriously to follow the direction of thy providence in this restraint; and now that I am so much alone by myself, to descend into my own heart, to search and try my ways, and unfeignedly to turn to thee my God.

Enlarge my spirit more than ever now that my body is confined, in fervent prayer for thy divine grace, and in cheerful thanksgivings for the innumerable benefits that I have received from thy bounty, and in tender pity and commiseration of the sad condition of all distressed people. And be pleased to touch the hearts of my creditors also with a sense of my miseries; incline them to accept of what I am able to pay, and make me willing conscientiously to satisfy them to the utmost of my power.

In the mean time bestow upon me the blessing of a contented spirit. Help me patiently to endure the inconveniences of this place. And preserve me from the danger of all the temptations which I meet with in it; especially from seeking a remedy of my sorrows in the pleasures of intemperance, or evil company, or any profane mirth whatsoever. Be thou my comfort, O God, my exceeding joy, and the full satisfaction of my soul in all conditions.

And when thou art pleased to deliver me from this place, and restore me again to my desired freedom, O Lord, make me ever mindful of the vows wherein I am now forward to bind myself. Dispose my heart then to be so sensibly affected with the least of those mercies which formerly I have little regarded, that I may never forget to praise thee even for the benefit of a sweeter air than now I enjoy, and to acknowledge

[s] Here acknowledge the particulars.

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thee in the night season upon my bed, and to thank thee for the coarsest food; and especially I may rejoice to go again into the great congregation to praise thee with the most ardent love for all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

Preserve in me also a grateful remembrance of the kindness of my friends and neighbours; especially of those persons to whom I stand particularly indebted, when by their charity I shall be released. And whatsoever loss they sustain by my poverty, good Lord, make it up abundantly to them and theirs out of thy rich grace and mercy. Requite their love with plenty and prosperity in this world, and give them the reward of eternal life and glory in the world to come, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

A prayer of a great malefactor in prison.

O most holy and righteous Judge of the whole world, give a sinful and miserable wretch leave to prostrate himself before the throne of thy grace, and implore that mercy which formerly I have despised or abused. I am not worthy, I confess, to lift up mine eyes towards heaven, and it becomes me in the greatest dejection of spirit to sigh and groan under the load of my sins, which have been so great and many, so bold, so presumptuous and shameless, that when with an awakened mind I reflect upon them, I am ready to sink into hell and utterly despair of any mercy.

O God, *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that admonished me*[t]*!* How swift have my feet been to run into evil! and how backward and averse have I been to anything that is good! O the injuries which I have done my neighbours! the abuse of myself and of thy good creatures! the profane contempt or neglect of thee and the duties of thy worship and service[u]! The remembrance of all this is dreadful, the burden of it is intolerable.

How shall I appear before thee, at whose rebuke the mountains quake, since I cannot think of appearing before an

[t] Prov. v. 12, 13.

[u] Here let him reckon up the blasphemy, debauchery, and violence that he hath been guilty of.

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earthly judge without shame and affrightment of spirit? O Lord, work in me a greater dread of thee, with a greater shame and confusion of face, now that I am in thy presence. For which end, be pleased to represent unto me effectually the wickedness, the baseness, and vileness of all my evil doings, as well as the guilt and just desert of them. O that I could hate and abhor them more than that death[x] which I expect shortly to suffer for them! Bestow on me that ingenuous and godly sorrow which worketh repentance and unfeigned purposes of amendment of life. They come too late indeed, I may justly think, to find acceptance with thee; and therefore not without fear and trembling, and a great sense of my undeservings, I look up unto thee, acknowledging thy infinite goodness if thou wilt vouchsafe but the smallest hope of mercy.

Mercy, mercy, good Lord; cast me not quite out of thy sight, for Jesus Christ his sake, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity. It is the beginning of some mercy, and an earnest I hope of more, that thou hast made me sensible of mine offences, and that thou hast wrought in me a resolution to forsake them, and some love to a godly, sober, and righteous life. Help me to manifest the sincerity and uprightness of my soul in these resolutions as much as I am able, by giving thee hearty thanks that the hand of justice hath overtaken and laid hold upon me, and put a stop to the further mischief which I might have committed; and by making a free and open confession of my crimes, and taking the shame which belongs to me before others, and by acknowledging that I am unworthy to live; and by earnest admonishments to all to be warned by my example, and to cease betimes to do evil, and learn to do well.

O God, that I could glorify thee a little in my latter end after this manner! And till I come to receive my deserved punishment, help me to spend my time in bewailing my sins, in humbling myself before thee for them, in setting my heart against them, in studying and admiring with the greatest affection the holy life of the Lord Jesus, in calling other offenders to repentance, and exhorting them thereby to give thee glory. Deny me not the grace, I beseech thee, to enable me thus to employ myself; that I may have some taste of thy

[x] Or punishment, when the crime is less.

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mercy, and the fear of death may be abated by some hope, that when my soul shall be parted from the body, thou, O blessed Jesus, wilt receive it, though so unworthy, into some of thy heavenly mansions. Amen, Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A soldier's prayer that fights for his country.

O most mighty Lord, the Fountain of life, and strength, and courage; whom all the host of heaven continually obeys: I prostrate myself before thee in a religious sense, that the fear of thy divine Majesty, a pure conscience, and a strong hope and confidence in thy omnipotent goodness, will give the most assured resolution, valour, and boldness to our spirits in all dangers. Most humbly beseeching thee to purge my heart from the love of every thing that is offensive to thee; to pardon all my former sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue me with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, strictly to amend and reform my life, according to thy holy word.

Many temptations, I am sensible, will continually assault me in this state of life wherein I am engaged. But I earnestly beseech thee to defend me from the power of them as I desire to be defended from death, and to be covered by thee in the day of battle. O that no covetous desires or greediness of spoil, no ambition or vainglory, no hatred or malice may push me forward in any enterprise! But give me the victory over these and all other vile affections and passions before I meet with any other enemy. And graciously bless and prosper our arms for the defence of our country, and the preservation of our religion, government, laws, and liberties. And whilst we fight for the preservation of good order, Lord, give us all grace to be examples of it ourselves. That, abhorring all blasphemy and profaneness, all riot and lasciviousness, and *doing violence to no man, accusing no man falsely, and being content with our wages*[y], we may adorn both our cause and our religion; and whatsoever the issue be, we may have peace in our own hearts, and living or dying, may be accepted with thee, through Christ Jesus, the Prince of peace. To whom, &c. Amen.

[y] Luke iii. 14.

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A prayer for the use of one that is aged.

I adore thee, O Lord of life and glory: who art from everlasting to everlasting, and changest not: beseeching thee to look graciously upon thy unworthy servant, whose hope is only in thy infinite mercy, by which my life hath been prolonged to old age, and which is able to make me eternally blessed. I thank thee for thy inconceivable love in the Lord Jesus, who hath given me such a solid and steadfast ground of hope to support and strengthen my heart when all the comforts of this life fail me; and likewise praise and magnify thy bounteous goodness for those innumerable blessings which time after time thou hast bestowed upon me, from the beginning of my life till this present[z].

O my God, help me always to solace myself, now that the days are come wherein I have no pleasure, with a perpetual remembrance of all thy past loving-kindnesses to me, and with those hopes which I have of thy endless love in the other world. And the more my outward senses decay, vouchsafe me the quicker and more lively sense in my heart of those good things which thou hast laid up there for those that fear thee.

Preserve me from all discontented thoughts and peevish passions. Make me an example unto others of *holiness, discretion, temperance, gravity, peaceableness, and patience*[a], that so I may, with the more authority, be *a teacher of good things;* and *my hoary head may be a crown of glory, being found in the ways of* righteousness[b]. *O how comely a thing is judgment for grey hairs, and for ancient men to know counsel*[c]*!* Pardon me, good Lord, that I have made no better improvement of my time and experience for the furnishing of my mind with this wisdom and with those virtues. Pardon all my negligences and all my offences[d]; and fill my heart with a comfortable sense of thy pardoning mercy in Christ Jesus, that having no other burden but that of age to oppress my spirit, I may rejoice in thee as long as I live; and at last lay myself down to rest in peace, and return my soul back unto thee

[z] Let them be reckoned up as particularly as you can.

[a] Tit. ii. 2, 3.

[b] Prov. xvi. 31.

[c] Ecclus. xxv. 4.

[d] Remember them particularly.

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cheerfully whensoever thou callest for it, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the dead, and of that glory, honour, and immortality which thou hast graciously promised us by thy dear Son, my most blessed Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus, with whom I desire to live to give thee eternal praises. Amen.

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A

LARGE FORM OF DEVOTION.

When any person is disposed to spend a day, or part of it, in devotion, the usual addresses to God in the morning may be continued in this manner.

O most High and Holy One, who inhabitest eternity, and art God over all, most blessed for evermore, happy are they who stand continually in thy presence, and are always admiring, praising, loving, and obeying thee, and rejoicing in thy love and favour towards them! The highest angels can desire no greater bliss than to be thus knit unto him, and to live in such constant union and friendship with thee. An happiness, I am sensible, that is above our reach who dwell in houses of clay, and groan under the burden of this flesh; but which we aspire towards, and our unclothed spirits hope for in the other world. And blessed be thy infinite goodness, we are encouraged by Christ Jesus to look up unto thee for the beginning and taste of this happiness, whilst we remain here below at this great distance from the throne of thy glory.

And accordingly, I humbly prostrate myself before thee at this time, beseeching thee, in the name of my dear Saviour who gave himself for me, that thou wilt graciously vouchsafe to inspire me with such delightful thoughts of thee, and such a transforming love unto thee as may fill my heart with unspeakable joy and satisfaction, whilst I am in thy presence, to admire and adore thee; to praise thy incomprehensible perfections; to acknowledge with all humility my entire dependence on thee; thankfully to remember all the benefits thou hast done unto me; sorrowfully to bewail my ungrateful behaviour towards thee; most earnestly to deprecate thy displeasure; to implore thy grace and favour; and to make an absolute sur-

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render of myself to thee, with most hearty devotion to thy service.

It is the unfeigned desire of my soul to spend some time in attending wholly to these duties, the better to dispose me to serve thee in the rest of my life. But alas! O Lord, what am I, or what can I do, unless thou wilt make thyself present to me, and send down thy Holy Spirit upon me? My thoughts and affections are exceeding dull and heavy, and they will soon flag and grow weary, unless thou wilt be pleased, by thy Almighty power, to raise and bear them up towards heaven. I most humbly therefore again beseech thee, in thy infinite mercy, to touch my heart with such a lively sense of thy divine Majesty as may fix my wandering thoughts, and compose my tumultuous affections, and stir up my flat and cold desires, and may make me feel the power and taste the sweetness of every divine truth, whilst I read or meditate in thy holy word, and whilst I pray to thee, and praise thee, and bless thy holy name.

O that all other things may be shut out of my soul, and that I may be so alone with thee as to be more apprehensive of thy greatness, and of thy goodness, and of thy purity, and of my near relation to thee, and the innumerable obligations which I lie under to be thine entirely! O that nothing may be so bitter to me as to think that I have in the least offended thee! and that nothing may be so marvellous in my eyes as thy exceeding abundant love in the Lord Jesus, by whom thou hast encouraged sinners to place their faith and hope in thee!

Help me, O my God, through that new and living way which he hath consecrated, to draw nigh unto thee, and to throw down myself at thy feet, waiting for a gracious look from thee, resigning my will to thee, strongly uniting it in hearty affection to thy holy will, and resolving never to rise up any more in opposition to it, but to live in thy love, and in sincere obedience to all thy commands.

So shall my soul bless thee as long as I live; I will alway be speaking good of thy name, and will *show forth thy praise*, as well as I am able, *to all generations*[a]. Amen.

[a] [Ps. lxxix. 13.]

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After this short address to God for his assistance, consider a while who it is to whom you have begun to speak. Cast your eyes upon the heaven and the earth, and think of the glory of that Majesty which fills all things, and cannot be contained in any. Then labour to affect your heart with your own mean, vile, and sinful condition. For which end examine what particular sins you have been guilty of. Set them down in writing before your eyes, that they may be confessed and lamented. And likewise consider in the same manner what particular blessings you have received, that they may be most thankfully acknowledged. In all which you may assist yourselves, and be much excited by reading some of the Psalms of David, and some part of such pious books as you are acquainted withal. After which, proceed to express the sense of your heart to God with the greatest deliberation, in the manner following: pausing a while, and ruminating upon what you have said, at the end of every part thereof.

I.

O most glorious Majesty of heaven and earth, upon whom all creatures depend for life, and breath, and all things: I most thankfully embrace and desire wisely and faithfully to improve this happy leisure which thou vouchsafest me of retiring from this world, and making my resort to thee, *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*[a]. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive from me and from the whole world, *blessing, and honour, and glory, and power*[b], for *thou art great, and greatly to be praised*[c]. All the host of heaven continually praiseth thee; and so ought all the church on earth, saying, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to come*[d]. *There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides thee*[e]. *Thou art righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works*[f]. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity*[g]; *and art excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice*[h]. *The earth is thine, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein*[i]. *The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork*[j]. *The sun, moon, and stars praise the name*

[a] 2 Cor. i. 3. [b] Rev. v. 13. [c] Ps. xlviii. 1. [d] Rev. iv. 8.
[e] 1 Sam. ii. 2. [f] Ps. cxlv. 17. [g] xlv. 7. [h] Job xxxvii. 23.
[i] [Ps. xxiv. 1.] [j] Ps. xix. 1.

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of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass[j]. *I know, O Lord, that thou canst do every thing; and that no thought of thine can be hindered*[k]. *Whatsoever the Lord pleases, that doth he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places*[l]. *For he is great, and of great power; his understanding is infinite*[m].

Praised be thy sovereign goodness and tender *mercy*, which spreads itself *over all thy works! O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. And they all wait on thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works*[n]. Thou always wast, and ever wilt be, the most holy, powerful, wise and good. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts*[o]. They all pass away like a shadow; *but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end*[p]. *For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven: thy faithfulness is unto all generations*[q]. *While I live* therefore *will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises to my God while I have any being*[r]. *I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart*[s], *whose name is exalted above all blessing and praise. For we cannot know the Almighty to perfection*[t]: *his wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. His name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven*[u].

II.

O what dignity is this! that I am admitted into thy presence to speak unto thee, the *blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hast immortality*[x]! O how happy ought I to think myself, that I may draw thus nigh to thee, who dwellest in light unapproachable! who art so

[j] Ps. cxlviii. 5, 6. [k] Job xlii. 2. [l] Ps. cxxxv. 6. [m] cxlvii. 5.
[n] civ. 24, 27, 28, 31. [o] cxlv. 4, 13. [p] cii. 27. [q] cxix. 89, 90.
[r] cxlvi. 2. [s] cxi. 1. [t] Job xi. 7. [u] Ps. cxlviii. 13. [x] 1 Tim. vi. 15.

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happy in thy own most blessed nature; and who, if thou dost but open thyself to any soul, and fillest it with a great sense of thee and affection to thee, thou lettest heavenly joys into it, and makest it happy beyond expression! For heaven cannot be separated from thee: but wheresoever thou art, there is peace and satisfaction, joy and gladness, and unspeakable bliss.

Adored be thy divine goodness, which hath made me so happy this day, as to feel some sense of thee begin to shine in my soul. Adored be thy goodness, which encourages me still to look up unto thee, that I may feel more of thee; yea hath engaged me by innumerable mercies, to continue these addresses to thy divine Majesty: *O how excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God*[y]*! How precious are thy thoughts unto me! how great is the sum of them*[z]*! Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to meward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered*[a]. By thee I was *fearfully and wonderfully made in secret. Thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb, and didst make me hope upon her breasts. I have been cast upon thee ever since*[b], and thou hast been my gracious God unto this moment.

My infancy and childhood was attended with a very careful providence. And thou hast blessed my riper years with a continual health and strength of body and mind, and abundance of good things to support and refresh me in my pilgrimage through this world to a better life. I never have wanted my daily bread, even when I was not able to ask it of thee. And thou hast bestowed on me many friends and kind benefactors. And prevented me likewise by a timely grace, and sent me many instructors, that I might remember thee my Creator, and Jesus Christ my Saviour: into whose family, blessed be thy name, I was early adopted and assured of thy fatherly love and tender mercy towards me. O how deeply do I stand indebted to thee for all those by whose counsels, or sermons, or writings, or religious society, or godly examples, or charitable prayers, I have been helped forward in my way to heaven! Blessed be thy name for all the means whereby I have been led to the

[y] Psal. xxxvi. 7. [z] cxxxix. 14, 17. [a] xl. 5. [b] xxii. 9, 10.

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knowledge of thy great love in the Lord Jesus, which passeth knowledge.

For ever blessed be thy name for sending him into the world, born of a woman to be a teacher of righteousness; to go before us, and leave us a pattern of a most holy life; to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification: and then to ascend into the heavens to prepare a place for us; where thou hast advanced him *above all principalities and powers, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess him to be the Lord, to the glory of thee, O God the Father Almighty*[b]. I glorify thee, O heavenly Father, with all my heart and soul for inspiring thy holy apostles and prophets; and *shining into their hearts to give the light of the knowledge of thy glory, in the face of Jesus Christ*[c]. I thank thee for calling me to faith in thee; for making such great and precious promises to encourage our hope, and for disposing me in any measure to be an inheritor of them. I thank thee for granting such power to our blessed Lord to fulfil his word; for making him a royal High Priest, and appointing him to bless us here and eternally hereafter.

Glory be to thee, O Lord most high, who hast so often favoured me with the gracious visitations of thy Holy Spirit; enlightening my mind, drawing my will towards thee, exciting in me holy desires, working many pious purposes and resolutions in my heart, giving me a taste how gracious thou art, setting before me the hope of eternal life, and persuading me by innumerable arguments to entertain those blessings which I should have been forward of myself to have desired. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord! who can show forth all his praise*[d]? How often hast thou spared me when I deserved to be punished! How many dangers have I escaped! from how many assaults of the enemy have I been guarded! and how many of his designs have been defeated by an invisible and unobserved goodness, which ought for ever to be acknowledged.

[Mention all the particular mercies you can remember: and then proceed still to admire his loving-kindness in all those you took no notice of, or have forgotten.]

[b] Ephes. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9, 10. [c] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [d] Ps. cvi. 2.

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III.

O my God, with what awe and reverence ought I to make mention of thy name, *who dwellest in eternity; whose throne is inestimable, whose glory cannot be comprehended, before whom the hosts of angels stand with trembling*[f]! With what humility of soul ought I to acknowledge thy divine grace, that thou, who art so great and highly exalted, wilt humble thyself to take notice of such poor things as we are! Thou art to be admired with our highest thoughts; thou art to be loved with all our heart, and soul, and strength. We ought to render thee most cheerful service; and confess that we never serve ourselves more than when we even lose all thought of ourselves, and forget all things here in admiring, loving, praising, and giving thanks to thee.

All that is within me ought to bless thy holy name. O how great ought my joy to be in thy love, and in thy salvation; who art *worthy to be praised with all pure and holy praise. Therefore let thy saints praise thee with all thy creatures: and let all thine angels and thine elect praise thee for ever. It is good to praise God and exalt his name, and with honour to show forth all his works; therefore be not slack to praise him*[g]. Yea to thee, O Lord, I ought to resign myself with the greatest willingness of heart; to trust and hope in thee at all times; to excite all others to show forth thy praise; and to study to glorify thee more and more, not only by my words, but with my body and soul, in all the actions of a sober, righteous and godly life. I can desire no greater honour in this world, than that I may live to the praise of the glory of thy grace in Christ Jesus; walking worthy of thee, who hast called me to thy kingdom and glory; and behaving myself in all things as becomes one that hath received such pledges of thy love already, and looks for thy mercy unto eternal life.

All thy laws, I know, are just and good. *Thy ways are ways of pleasantness, and all thy paths are peace*[h]. *More to be desired are thy commandments than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb*[i]. *By them doth thy servant shine gloriously; and in keeping of*

[f] 2 Esdras viii. 20, 21. [g] Tobit viii. 16; xii. 6. [h] Prov. iii. 17. [i] Ps. xix. 10, 11.

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them there is great reward. He that loveth them, loveth life; he that holdeth them fast shall inherit glory; and wheresoever they enter, the Lord will bless[k]. *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee*[l].

IV.

But the more, O Lord, I speak in thy praise, the more I am sensible I reproach myself; who have not given thee that honour and glory, that fear and love, that hearty service and cheerful obedience, which is due unto thee so many ways. I stand condemned out of my own mouth of most fearful ingratitude to thee, from whom I have received so many and such inestimable benefits. How seldom have I thought of them! or how little have they affected my heart! How loath have I often been to dispose myself to commemorate the greatest love of my dearest Saviour! And how soon am I weary even of the most delightful employment of praising and blessing thee, with whom I profess that I desire and hope to live for ever, and praise thy name! O the vanity of my mind! the looseness of my thoughts! the inordinateness of my desires, and unruliness of my passions! the discontent of my spirit! the unsteadfastness of my resolutions! the breach of my promises! the coldness of my prayers and the dulness of my meditations! the loss of my precious time, and neglect of good opportunities! my eagerness after these worldly enjoyments, and feeble endeavours after heaven!

I am astonished to think that ever I should distrust thy providence, who hast been so tenderly careful of me; or be unthankful for thy benefits, which are every moment poured forth so plentifully upon me; or be uncharitable to my neighbours, when I stand in so great need of mercy myself, and live continually upon thy bounty; or abuse any of those blessings, which thou canst so easily deprive me of, or wholly spoil the comfort of them. And yet, alas! how prone have I been to deceive myself with shadows of religion and devotion towards thee! and to content myself with the praises of those divine

[k] Ecclus. iv. 12, 13. [l] Ps. cxix. 165; lxxxiv. 11, 12.

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perfections, which I have not so zealously studied to imitate! O how unlike am I to the humble, the meek, the pitiful, and the patient Jesus! yea, how insensible am I of his incomparable love, which made him to lay down his life for me! How many ways have I injured my neighbours, or neglected to do them good! I am conscious to myself of sundry offences, not only against the rules of righteousness and mercy, but of sobriety and godliness[a]. And thou, to whom all things past are present, who searchest the hearts and triest the reins, knowest a great deal more. My secret sins are no more hid from thee than those which are most open and manifest.

And they are all the more grievous, because a petty temptation hath too oft prevailed to make me neglect my duty towards thee. O how shameful is it, that a small gain, or a momentary pleasure, or the good word of men, whose breath is in their nostrils, should be preferred before that honour which I owe to thee, and those infinite treasures of thy grace in Christ Jesus, and that immortal life and glory which he hath promised to the faithful! and all this against the clear understanding which thou hast given me of thy will, against many holy purposes, resolutions, and vows of absolute obedience to it in all things, and against the tastes I have had how gracious thou art, and how good it is to keep thy commandments.

V.

I blush, O Lord, to lift up mine eyes towards heaven. To me belongs nothing but shame and confusion of face; in which I ought to lie down before thee, if I reflected only upon the baseness and vileness of my descent; being the offspring of disloyal parents, who were rebels and traitors against thy divine Majesty. This is a just reproach and disgrace to the best of us. We were tainted in our first father, who hath left a foul blot and stain upon our nature; and we feel that weakness in our reason, that strength and violence in our passions, and that forwardness in our wills to follow them, and to be led by them, which is sufficient to humble and lay us low in our own eyes. With what dejection of spirit then ought I to mention all those offences whereby I or others have justified that first rebellion,

[a] Here mention the particular acts of intemperance, uncharitableness, or any else you have been guilty of.

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and still taken part with the devil and his angels against thee and the motions of thy Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Thy mercy indeed is so much the more miraculous, which hath bestowed such great benefits as I have acknowledged upon such vile, such sinful, such unthankful wretches, and at the best such unprofitable creatures; whose understandings are so shallow to comprehend and admire thy love; whose affections are so heavy, so listless, and so unapt to lay it to heart; and who, when they have done all that they can, have done no more than was their duty to do. But the greater reason there is that I should be confounded at the remembrance of my disobedience to thee, notwithstanding such unexpected as well as undeserved demonstrations of thy love and grace towards mankind. It becomes me to bow myself lower than my knees before thee, and to debase myself as much as I am able in thy presence, since I am but sinful dust and ashes, that deserves to be cast down even into the pit of destruction. The very multitude of my offences is enough to amaze and perplex my thoughts; the weight of them, did I always feel it, may well depress and sink my spirit into the greatest horror and affrightment, but the baseness and ingratitude of them to so gracious a Father, O how——

VI.

I am not able to express, O Lord, the shame, the consternation, and the trouble of my spirit, at the thought of that ingratitude. I loathe and abhor myself as unworthy to live and breathe upon the face of the earth. I am astonished at thy wonderful patience and longsuffering, which not only endures such a wretch as I am, but permits me to speak unto thee, and to cry for mercy to that love which I have so much abused. O that I were sensibly affected with something of thee! that at least thy sparing and forbearing mercy did mightily move and everlastingly possess my heart with admiration of it! that so I may with the more ingenuous sorrow and grief bewail mine offences against such tender bowels of compassion towards me! *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears*[b], that I might weep bitterly for my unkind requitals of the infinite bounty of thee my Creator, and of the unconceiv-

[b] Jer. ix. 1.

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able love of my blessed Saviour, and of the unwearied grace of thy Holy Spirit, which I hope I still feel working in my heart.

Fill me, O God, with the saddest remembrance of all my follies; and possess my reason so much against them, that I may have an utter hatred and detestation of them, as the greatest offences to me, as well as to thy divine Majesty. It is easier, I know, to make large confessions, than to be truly contrite and broken in heart: and we are more inclined to sigh and groan under the sense of thy displeasure, than to *abhor that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good*[c]. Be thou therefore pleased, O Lord, the Father of our spirits, to wound my soul with a lively sense of the vileness of my behaviour towards thee, *the God of my life*[d], *in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways*[e]. Estrange me from everything that will not let me love thee with all my heart, and soul, and strength; by whom it is that I have power to love anything at all. Set my heart in such a perfect enmity to all things contrary to thy blessed will, that I may never be reconciled to them any more. And dispose me to such an entire affection to all thy commands, that none of them may be grievous to me, but I may account thy yoke to be easy, and thy burden to be light.

And then *be merciful unto me*, good Lord, *according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions*[f]. Be merciful unto me for Jesus his sake, who came into the world and died to save sinners. *O remember not the sins of my youth, nor the transgressions* of my riper years: *according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord*[g]. *For I confess mine iniquity, and am sorry for my sin*[h]. *I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid*[i]. *Enter not* therefore *into judgment with thy servant*[k]: *for if thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*[l]. *Thou art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee: give ear*, therefore, *unto my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplication*[m].

[c] Rom. xii. 9. [d] Ps. xlii. 8. [e] Dan. v. 23. [f] Ps. li. 1. [g] xxv. 7. [h] xxxviii. 18. [i] xxxii. 5. [k] cxliii. 2. [l] cxxx. 3, 4. [m] lxxxvi. 5, 6.

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And, *for thy name's sake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*[n].

VII.

Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord, who hast not yet cast me away from thy presence, nor dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to mine iniquities. Adored be thine infinite goodness, that I am so far from being cast into the place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, that I do not yet suffer here the pains and the anguish and misery which mine offences have deserved. I might have been lamenting them in those doleful complaints of thy ancient servant; saying, *Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease; and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart*[o]. But thanks be to thy most longsuffering goodness, *thy fierce anger goeth* not *over me; thy terror hath* not *cut me off. Lovers and friends hast thou* not *put far from me, nor mine acquaintance into darkness*[p].

Yea, thou declarest thyself willing to accept me again into friendship with thyself; and hast in the most loving manner invited me to come unto thee, and bid me hope for a pardon through thy mercy in Christ Jesus. O how sweet are those gracious words, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*[q]! How precious are thy promises, that *thou wilt put thy laws into our mind, and write them in our hearts; and be merciful to our unrighteousness, and remember our sins and iniquities no more*[r]! Marvellous was thy mercy, O Lord Jesus, who sent thine apostles *to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in thee*[s].

VIII.

I receive with all thankfulness this thy exceeding great

[n] Ps. xxv. 11. [o] xxxviii. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8. [p] lxxxviii. 16, 18.
[q] Matt. xi. 28. [r] Heb. viii. 10, 12. [s] Acts xxvi. 18.

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grace, which hath declared, that *if we walk in the light, as thou art in the light, we shall have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ thy Son shall cleanse us from all sin*[t]. I admire thy incomprehensible love: *O how great is the loving-kindness of the Lord our God, and his compassion unto such as turn unto him in holiness*[u]*!* It constrains me to offer up myself with the heartiest affection to thy service; resolving hereafter to be more watchful, more diligent, more zealous in the performance of my duty, and to walk more circumspectly, as a child of the light, and to make it my delight to do thy will, O God. Behold, O Lord, my heart is bent to resign itself perfectly into thy hands; and to make a new dedication of all the powers of my soul and body to be employed continually in well-doing. *I have sworn and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous precepts*[x]. *I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgments have I laid before me. I will stick unto thy testimonies, and run the way of thy commandments*[y]. *Thy word have I hid in my heart; that I may not sin against thee*[z]. *I will rejoice in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself also in thy statutes: I will never forget thy word*[a]. *Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God*[b]. *Thy testimonies have I taken as my heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end*[c].

IX.

Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law: yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments[d]. I am sensible of the exceeding great weakness and inconstancy of our nature, and that without thy gracious aids I shall not be able to accomplish these resolutions. And therefore I look up unto thee with the more ardent desires for power from above

[t] 1 John i. 7. [u] Ecclus. xvii. 29. [x] Ps. cxix. 106. [y] 30, 31, 32. [z] 11. [a] 14, 15, 16. [b] 115. [c] 111, 112. [d] 108, 34, 35, 10.

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to confirm and strengthen them, and to assist me mightily to fulfil thy whole good-will and pleasure. I will steadfastly depend upon the promise of my blessed Saviour, who hath told me that thou wilt give thy Holy Spirit to them that ask it of thee. My hope, O God, is in this thy true and faithful word. *Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually* [d]. Preserve in me such a lively sense of thy good-will and readiness to help me, that I may be so *strong in our Lord, and in the power of his might* [e], as to be *able to do all things through Christ strengthening of me* [f].

O thou Father of mercies, who hast bestowed so many and so great blessings on us without asking, who hast visited us so lovingly when we could not desire any grace from thee, and when we could, but did not desire it, and when we did, but very coldly and with little devotion of spirit; deny not the humble and importunate requests of thy poor supplicant, who most earnestly beseeches thee *that thou wilt grant me, according to the riches of thy glory, to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man* [g]. Arm me therewith against the assault of all temptations, either from the good or the evil things of this life, that they may never seduce or deter me from my duty; but I may do virtuously in all points, according to my Christian profession, and those vows and promises wherein I stand engaged to thee.

X.

Fill me, O God, with the whole knowledge of thy *will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that I may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of thee my God* [h]. Increase that faith likewise more and more which *worketh by love* [i], *purifieth the heart* [j], and *overcometh the world* [k]. Stir up in me that lively hope which may make me *purify myself, even as thou art pure* [l]: and that ardent love to thee, which will make me cheerfully do thy will, and love my brethren *with a pure heart fervently* [m].

[d] Ps. cxix. 116, 117. [e] [Ephes. vi. 10.] [f] [Phil. iv. 13.] [g] Eph. iii. 16. [h] [Col. i. 9, 11.] [i] [Gal. v. 5, 6.] [j] [Acts xv. 9.] [k] [1 John v. 4.] [l] [1 John iii. 3.] [m] [1 Pet. i. 22.]

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Excite in me a *great hunger and thirst after righteousness,* till I feel the satisfaction of perfect reconciliation with thee, and conformity to thee. Continue me in the number of those who are humble and lowly in their own eyes, and moderate in all their appetites and desires; who mourn daily that they have offended thee, and that others keep not thy laws: who are *meek and gentle towards all men* in heart and word and all their actions, who are *merciful* and kind, ready to give and to forgive: who are pure in all their thoughts, intentions, passions and conversation, and who study the things that *make for peace,* and who are void of all pride and vainglory, of all strife and contention, *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* O my God, possess me with such a strong sense of the blessedness which thou hast pronounced to all these, that I may be willing also to suffer wrong rather than to do it, and to suffer anything for righteousness' sake with a constant heart; giving thanks unto thee that thou wilt honour me and count me worthy *to suffer for the name of Christ.*

Help me to give a good example to all my neighbours by the sincere practice of all these virtues, *shining as a light in the world,* and being *the salt of the earth:* that others *seeing my good works may glorify thee our heavenly Father.* Dispose my heart *to cast all its care on thee; to pray without ceasing, to bless thy holy Name at all times; to trust in thee* with a steadfast confidence in thy Almighty goodness; to make thee *my strength and my fortress, and the rock of my salvation; to have my conversation without covetousness, and to set my affections on things above, where Christ is, at thy right hand. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, let thy comforts, O Lord, delight my soul.* When I am full, O that I may never wax wanton or forget thee, but *still rejoice in our Lord alway,* that so, when I *have nothing,* I may be *as possessing all things!*

Let the doing of my duty ever be my pleasure; and to serve thee be a great reward. Let a contented mind be instead of all that I want; and a thankful heart sweeten all my enjoyments. Let patience always ease me under my burdens, and an entire submission to thy will breed in me a settled tranquillity of spirit. Let my delight be in the excellent that are in the earth, and my thoughts be very much there while I live

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where I desire to be when I die. O that heaven being my aim, my hope, and the longing expectation of my soul, I may conquer all difficulties in my way to it, and go through honour and dishonour, good report and bad report, prosperity and adversity, with the same cheerfulness and evenness of mind; till at last I come to that place of rest and peace with the glorified Jesus, who is able to give eternal life to them that obey him!

XI.

Blessed be thy name, who hast inspired my heart with these holy desires, and wrought these purposes and resolutions in me. It is an earnest, I hope, of thy never-failing love towards me; in assurance of which I repose myself with full satisfaction of heart. Yea, this is my joy and my glory, that I know thee, and that I live under the care of thy wise, merciful, and almighty providence at present, and that I have the promise of remission of sins, and of a crown of life; *when the times of refreshment shall come from thy presence*[f], *and thou shalt send Jesus* to conduct all the faithful to that glorious place where he lives. *This is my salvation and all my desire*[g]. Now that I see thy abundant love, O heavenly Father, it sufficeth. Rejoice with me likewise, all ye angels of God, according to the word of our Lord, that *there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth*[h]. *Bless the Lord ye heavenly hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure*[i]. And O that this joy may increase continually by my daily increase in all goodness, and the perfecting of my repentance, till I come to be admitted into their company, and *enter into the joy of my Lord*[j]!

XII.

And I wish the same happiness to all mankind which I desire for myself. It will multiply my joy to see all the people praise thee, O God, to see all the people praise thee. O *make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with thanksgiving*[k]. *Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due*

[f] Acts iii. 19. [g] 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. [h] Luke xv. 7.
[i] Ps. ciii. 21. [j] [Matt. xxv. 21, 23.] [k] c. 1.

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unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord with holy worship: fear before him all the earth[l].

More especially, I desire the increase of *grace, mercy and peace* to thy chosen people; beseeching thee to bless thy universal church, and to fill the hearts of all its members with thy love, that they may rest neither day nor night, saying, Blessed be God; blessed be the glorious Majesty of heaven and earth, whose power, wisdom and goodness excel all praise, and endure for ever. And *arise, O God, for the sighing of the poor and the needy, let not the men of the earth always oppress them*[m]. *Let the salvation of thy people come out of thy holy place*[n]. *Be thou exalted in thy own strength, and so will we sing and praise thy power*[o]. *Lord, continue thy loving-kindness unto those that know thee; and thy righteousness to men of upright heart. Let not the foot of pride come against them, and let not the hand of the wicked remove them*[p]. *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end: but establish thou the just*[q].

Protect, O Lord, and defend that part of thy church which thou hast planted in these kingdoms. Great and innumerable have been thy mercies to us: but alas! we are a *stubborn and rebellious people; a people that set not our heart aright, and whose spirit hath not been steadfast with thee*[r]. And therefore thou hast justly plagued us many ways; and we should have but our deserts if thy hand should still be stretched out to *punish us seven times more for our sins*[s]. *But what is man, that thou shouldest take displeasure at him? or what is a corruptible generation, that thou shouldest be extremely angry with them? For in truth there is none among them but hath dealt wickedly: and among the faithful there is none that hath not done amiss. But in this, O Lord, thy righteousness and goodness shall be declared, if thou be merciful to them which have not the confidence of good works*[t].

O be merciful unto us, be merciful unto us, and do not utterly forsake us. *O remember not against us former iniquities*, and that we have *so soon forgot thy works*, and the wonderful deliverances which thou hast given us. *Help us, O*

[l] Ps. xcvi. 8, 9. [m] x. 18. [r] lxxviii. 8. [s] [Lev. xxvi. 24.]
[n] xiv. 7. [o] xxi. 13. [t] 2 Esdras viii. 34–36.
[p] xxxvi. 10–12. [q] vii. 9.

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God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us and purge away our sins for thy name's sake[t]. Fill us with thy wisdom from above, that we may be heartily in love with the religion which we profess, and preserve us in it for ever. Defeat the counsels of all its enemies, and bring their wicked devices to nought. Unite us to each other in brotherly love, and make us at peace among ourselves. O let peace be within this church: *let them prosper that love her and seek her good. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity*[u].

And for that end endue our sovereign lord the king with all the gifts and graces of thy Holy Spirit. Hear the daily prayers of thy church for him, "that he may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy ways; and study to preserve thy people committed to his charge in wealth, peace, and godliness." Enlighten all our bishops, priests, and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of thy word, and enable them both by their life and doctrine to set it forth and shew it accordingly. Teach all our counsellors and senators wisdom, and give all our magistrates courage and zeal to execute justice and to maintain truth. Vouchsafe to all thy people increase of grace, to hear thy word with meekness and to receive it with pure and sincere affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Give them honest and good hearts, "to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him: to submit themselves to all their governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters: to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters: and to be careful not to hurt one another by word or deed: to be just and true in all their dealing: to bear no malice nor hatred in their hearts: to preserve themselves in temperance, soberness and chastity: not to covet one another's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get their own living, and to do their duty in that state of life unto which it hath pleased thee to call them."

And, good Lord, bless the honest labours of all men among us, and crown them with good success; especially of those who have any work in hand for the glory of thy name, the increase of Christian piety, and the peace of thy church. Reward the bounty of all charitable persons, either for the honour of

[t] Psalm lxxix. 8, 9. [u] cxviii. 25.

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religion, or the relief of them that are in poverty. And make the bones which thou hast broken to rejoice. Comfort all that are in a sorrowful condition, and bring them out of all their troubles. Send thy angel to guide and preserve those who are in journeys upon their lawful occasions. Let them that go down into the deep, and do business upon the great waters, observe thy providence; and praise thee for thy goodness, and for thy wonderful works for the children of men. Forgive all that have done me any evil, and requite the kindness of those who have done me any good. *Let their souls abide in good, and their seed inherit the earth*[x]. Rejoice the heart of all my friends, and fulfil the petitions of all that have desired my prayers. *Let none that wait on thee, O Lord, be ashamed; let all them that trust in thee say continually, The Lord be magnified. Save and deliver every one of us, O Lord our God, from the hands of our enemies, to give thanks unto thy holy name and to triumph in thy praise. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise the Lord*[y].

After this, if the spirits be tired, it will be fit to give them some refreshment. And then it will be very profitable to read and weigh seriously our Saviour's sermon on the mount, contained in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. And such meditations may be interspersed as are most suitable to the person's condition and occasions; with the addition of some of the prayers foregoing, for resolution in well-doing, or for the divine grace, or for good success in any business, or for friends that are troubled in mind, or are in a long journey, &c. And then conclude with the following prayer and thanksgiving.

I.

I most humbly adore and worship thee, O Lord most high, the Possessor of heaven and earth; and admire thy infinite love to mankind, whom thou hast thought worth the expense of the blood of thy dear Son, and the conduct and assistance of the Holy Ghost, and the ministry of angels (by whom thou exercisest a most watchful providence over us), and so many gracious messages from heaven, wherein thou hast plainly declared that thou desirest to see us eternally happy by being

[x] Ps. xxv. 13. [y] xl. 16; cvi. ult.

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made partakers of a divine nature. When we seriously consider thy glorious perfections, and thy astonishing kindness towards us, we may justly wonder at ourselves, that we should ever refuse to be conformed to thy will; nay, that we should not be exceeding forward to join ourselves unto thee in most hearty love and entire friendship with thee. I am amazed at the dulness and stupidity of our nature, that there should need so many entreaties and beseechings of us to be so happy. It is impossible to think of thee, and to prefer anything in our esteem, and desire and choice, and delight and joy before thy favour and goodwill towards us, who art so able and so desirous to bestow the greatest bliss upon us. And therefore I most earnestly beseech thy goodness, that to all other mercies which I have begged of thee, thou wilt add this grace, to bring thyself often to my remembrance, and to possess my heart with a constant, serious, and deep sense of thy marvellous kindness; in giving me liberty to choose so great a good as thyself, and in propounding to my will such everlasting happiness; and in drawing me from those ways, which are contrary even to my peace and satisfaction here, by such powerful motives to well-doing.

II.

Awaken, O Lord, awaken the sense continually in my mind. Fasten my thoughts upon those unseen and eternal enjoyments. Make me feel what an happiness it is to love thee with all my heart; to cleave unto thee against all temptations which would allure or fright me from my duty; to bless and praise thee with joyful lips; to be kept in perfect peace and tranquillity, while my mind is stayed on thee; to be full and satisfied, and to desire nothing more but to live for ever in thy love. O make me more and more to conceive and remember, what an infinite delight thou the infinite good canst pour forth into us; how highly our Lord Jesus is dignified and exalted; and that *thou hast made him most blessed for ever, and made him exceeding glad with thy countenance*[z]; and that he will bring all thy children unto his glory. Settle in my soul such strong apprehensions of these things, that they may purify my heart more perfectly, and provoke me to an unwearied diligence in well-doing, and make me *endure hardship* also, if need be, *as*

[z] Ps. xxi. 6.

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a good soldier of Jesus Christ, who was made perfect through sufferings [a].

III.

And assist me especially in these holy addresses to thee; that *continuing instant in prayer* [b], I may feel my heart lifted up more and more towards heaven by ardent breathings after thee. And endue me likewise with such a spirit of wisdom, and such sincerity of heart, that I may never be discouraged, though I fall short of the height of my desires; but I may always thankfully acknowledge thy grace in what I have attained, and labour earnestly to grow better with a quiet, patient, even, and steady mind. Preserve in me an humble confidence, that thou wilt never forsake the work of thine own hands; and let that confidence make me industrious, but not slothful. And let thy Holy Spirit bless and further my endeavours, and a fervent desire and hearty good-will press me forward, and the pleasures of religion mightily endear it to me, and the joy that thou hast set before me make me run the way of thy commandments with an enlarged heart. And the nearer I come to the end of my race, may it please thy goodness to present me with a clearer sight of that crown of life which our Lord hath promised! Open to me more of the treasures of thy kingdom, and fill me with a greater joy in hope of thy glory; that so I may be willing *to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.*

IV.

And now, O Lord, what thanks shall I render unto thee for these holy thoughts, desires, and affections which by thy grace I feel in my heart, together with all the other benefits which thou hast bestowed on me or intendest for me? Great and marvellous things, O God, hast thou wrought for the children of men, and thou hast promised far greater if we will but be truly grateful unto thee for what we have already received. Thou sendest one blessing as the earnest of another; having given thy Son to us that he might give us thy Holy Spirit, and given him to die for us that he might give us life. Thou grantest to us thy grace that we may repent, and thou givest repentance that thou mayest give us pardon; and thou pardonest our sins that we may be thy children, and being thy

[a] [2 Tim. ii. 3; Heb. ii. 10.] [b] [Rom. xii. 12.]

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children thou designest to make us thy heirs together with our blessed Saviour. Thou givest us temporal blessings that we may thirst after spiritual, and thou fillest us with spiritual blessings in Christ that we may long for the accomplishment of them in immortal life. There is none can declare the goodness of the Lord. We best declare our sense of it when we thankfully receive it, and become as good as thou wouldst have us and enablest us to be. And how great, how free is that goodness, which is most of all pleased when we are happy! and esteems our doing ourselves good, with thy grace and favour, the return that we should make of thy bounty! Thou dost us good before we ask, and thou givest liberally unto us that thou mayest move us to ask more. Thou entreatest us when we are unwilling; thou beseechest us that we would let thee bless us, and not put impediments in the way of our own happiness; thou pitiest us when we have no compassion for ourselves, and art still careful of us when we trifle away the richest mercies.

V.

O the exceeding riches of thy grace to the children of men! who can number all thy mercies? and who can understand the greatness of those of which we make mention? It is easier to speak of them than to be affected with the multitude and surpassing value of them; and we can sooner be affected with them than do anything worthy such excellent love. Our praises and thanksgiving consist too much in words, and transient admirations, and sudden passions. O that I had such a serious, such a considerate heart, as to return unto thee the constant, uniform, and cheerful obedience of a godly life! By which, I know, I shall not only most praise and glorify thee, but do the greatest benefit to myself. And when I have done all that I can, I will acknowledge myself an unprofitable servant, that hath done no more than was his duty to do. I will esteem all my goodness to be the fruit of *thy great goodness* to me. And I will rejoice in this, that thou art formed in me, and that I am made like unto the Son of thy love; and that I have hopes through thy abundant and undeserved mercy to live with him in his heavenly kingdom, which I beseech thee hasten to the eternal joy of all those that *love his appearing*[c].

[c] [2 Tim. iv. 8.]

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Amen, Amen. *Let thy kingdom come; that I may see the good of thy chosen, and glory with thine inheritance*[d]; and we may all with united hearts and affections render our thanks unto thee, and sing thy everlasting praises.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communication[e] *of the Holy Ghost*[f], *be with* me, and with all thy people everywhere, both now and always. Amen.

A prayer in Lent, or upon any public fast.

I.

O most glorious God, who art from everlasting to everlasting blessed in thyself, and who alone canst satisfy the hungry soul, and fillest the humble with good things: in a serious sense of my own emptiness and thy fulness, of my great needs, and thy bounty and readiness to bestow thy benefits, I cast down myself before thee: worshipping and adoring thine incomprehensible perfections, with a great fear of thy Almighty Majesty, and an humble hope in thine infinite goodness, and an hearty love to thy purity and righteousness, and entire submission to thy holy will; believing thy gracious promises, desiring to be guided by thy wisdom, depending on thy Providence, blessing and praising thee for thy unspeakable mercies to me, and earnestly beseeching the continuance of them; with a continued sense in my heart of thy abundant goodness to me, and to all thy creatures, and of those duties which I owe to thee and to all men.

II.

I most sorrowfully bewail my carelessness, O Lord, that I have had so seldom, or so short, or so cold and little affecting thoughts of thee; and that I have performed these acts of worship and adoration, of fear and reverence, of faith and love, of submission and resignation, of supplication and thanksgiving, with so little intention and earnestness of mind, with so little zeal and fervency of affection, and with so little humility and prostration of spirit. Nothing, O my God, is of so bitter remembrance to my thoughts, nothing is such a load to my heart as that I have loved the world at any time more than

[d] Ps. cvi. 5.] [e] [So in all the editions.] [f] [2 Cor. xiii. 14.]

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thee; and pursued with greater eagerness the possessions, and pleasures, and honours of a dying life, than the glory and treasures of thy kingdom, the joy and happiness of eternal endurance. It grieves me to think that I have at any time so coldly entertained the glad tidings of salvation; so listlessly embraced the loving invitations of my dear Saviour; so negligently improved the helps and assistances of the Holy Spirit of grace, and so faintly sought, I sorrowfully again acknowledge, that glory, honour, and immortality which Christ hath brought to light by his gospel. How little have I been wounded with the dying and bleeding of thy only begotten Son for my sake! How little concerned sometimes in his passionate desires of the happiness of mankind! How little melted with the ardent flames of his incomparable love! How little moved or persuaded with his importunate entreaties! How incompliant with his inspirations, disobedient to his commands, and insensible of his precious promises and fearful threatenings!

III.

I have praised thee, alas! but seldom or slightly, for so glorious an example as he hath left us of an holy life; for the effects and fruits of his passion and intercession; and for the power which he hath obtained at thy right hand. And loather have I, too often, been to imitate his life, and to employ that power which he hath sent me from heaven, to bring my heart to a conformity with his pattern. How often have I received thy good creatures without such serious and hearty thanksgivings for them as they deserve! and tasted their sweetness with little sense of thee, or delight in thee, who art the fountain of all bliss! How solicitous have I been to please men, and obtain the good opinion and praise of others, rather than to please thee, and to do thy commandments, *the praise of which endureth for ever*[g]! O the little envyings that have been in my heart at my brethren's greater prosperity! and my aptness to be angry and peevish; to entertain suspicions easily; to make wrong or unkind interpretations; to aggravate offences; and to keep too long a sense of injuries! I hate myself even for these things. O how vile then and odious are all those sins of injustice or unmercifulness of which I may have been guilty[h]!

[g] [Ps. cxi. 10.] [h] Here confess them particularly.

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IV.

Be merciful unto me, O Lord, be merciful unto me, through the blood of that spotless Lamb which was shed for the sins of the world. Remember not against me the vanity of my thoughts, the errors and mistakes of my judgment, the pride of my spirit, the greediness of my sensual desires, the violence and disorder of any of my passions, the unruliness of my tongue, the inconstancy of my purposes, or the baseness and unworthiness of any of my ends and intentions. O holy God and merciful Father, enter not into judgment with me for the mispense of my precious time, for letting slip any good opportunities, or for my ill husbanding the many talents which thou hast entrusted me withal. Let not the abuse of any of thy creatures, the ill example that I have given to any of my neighbours, my unthankfulness for a world of mercies, my inobservance and forgetfulness of thy fatherly providences, and my insensibleness of other's miseries, be charged upon me at the day of our Lord, or incense thy severe displeasure against me in this present life. O remember not my immoderate sorrow for worldly losses; my excessive pleasure in the abundance of any worldly enjoyments; the deadness of my grief and the scarcity of my tears for my own sins and the sins of others; and the heartlessness of my joys in thee and in thy Son Christ; and for all the good thou hast done to me and to my brethren, or which they do for thy honour and the comfort of thy people. Let not any discontent with my condition provoke thee to make it worse; nor any want of love to thee deprive me of the love of others; nor the breach of any of my resolutions be punished with an indifferency and carelessness of spirit; nor the abuse of any of thy blessings, or unthankfulness for them, move thine offended goodness to strip me naked of them.

V.

But, gracious Lord, so pardon me as to give me the grace of thy Holy Spirit to change and renew me throughout, in spirit, soul, and body, and to enable me daily to amend my life according to thy holy word. That is the hearty desire and purpose of my soul, which longs for nothing more than a power from above, to possess me with more steady and affectionate

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thoughts of thee; and to fill me with a more inflamed love to thee, and to all my brethren; and to dispose my will to resign itself in all things to thee, and cheerfully to comply with thy Providence, and zealously to employ all holy opportunities of doing or receiving good. O God, deny me not this great grace, though unworthy of the least, but strengthen me with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. Let it teach and direct me in the right way; let it assist me to walk in it; let it constantly encourage my progress, cheering and refreshing me when I am ready to faint, upholding me when I am ready to fall, recovering me when I slip, enabling me with fervent desires to implore thy mercy, and, with resolved watchfulness, to strengthen myself from all temptations for the time to come.

VI.

Preserve in me such a serious and deep sense of the worth of my soul, of the weight of all eternity, of the certainty and greatness of the glory which shall be revealed, that they may prevail more with me than all the honours, and riches, and pleasures of this life. Prepossess me with a clear understanding of the gospel of our Saviour, with a strong faith, a fervent charity, and a lively hope against all other things that press upon me and solicit my affections, that so nothing may find admittance into my heart but what shall submit to thy laws, and live under the government and discipline of our Lord Jesus. Instruct me how to make all my pleasures discreet, moderate, and useful to me, that they may never take up the best of my time, nor devour the strength of my mind. Teach me to use the riches of this world aright, and to do good to myself and others with them. Dispose me to look upon greatness or honours but as greater opportunities to do thee more honour and the world more service. Moderate all my passions, and subdue them perfectly to the obedience of reason and religion. O that all my conversation with others may be innocent and profitable, and my private retirements more devout and heavenly; and all my employments without inordinate cares and fears, or any distrust of thy good Providence. Help me to look upon long life as desirable, only that I may have more time to root out perfectly all evil habits and dispositions, to implant and increase all divine virtues, and to do the more

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good, that I may be better fitted for an happy life, world without end. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

The same prayer may be used in time of any public calamity; and some of these following prayers added as there shall be occasion.

A prayer in time of plague.

Great and many, O Lord, are the sins whereby we have provoked thee in these kingdoms to send all thy sore judgments upon us; *the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, to cut off from them man and beast*[z]. It is only of thy infinite mercies that we are not utterly consumed, and because thy compassions fail not. Blessed be thy goodness that we are not yet delivered into the hand of those that hate us, but only corrected by thy own hand, who art the Father of mercies. To thee we flee now in our great distress, and beseech thee that thou wilt not shut up the bowels of thy tender mercy and compassion towards us in displeasure. But punish us, that thou mayest pardon us, and amend us, and make us a more devout, sober, righteous, and charitable people, zealous of good works. Say to thy destroying angel, Hold thy hand, it is enough.

Or if thou art pleased to have it still stretched out against us, give grace to us who are yet in health to spend our time in examining our hearts and lives; in bewailing our offences; in settling our purposes of repentance and new obedience; in inuring ourselves to delight in prayer and holy meditation; in giving thanks to thee for thy merciful preservation of us; in preparing ourselves for whatsoever change thou art pleased to make in our condition; and in doing good with compassionate hearts, to those poor people that lie under thy heavy visitation. And graciously vouchsafe to bestow upon them entire patience and submission to thy will; and enable them with unfeigned repentance and humble hope in thy mercy, to resign themselves and theirs into thy hands; that howsoever thou shalt dispose of any of us, living or dying, we may be the Lord's.

[z] [Ezek. xiv. 21.]

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Lord have mercy upon us all, for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

In time of war.

O God, who hast justly punished our carnal security and abuse of that peace and quietness which we have enjoyed, by making us *hear the sound of the trumpet, and the alarm of war;* be merciful unto us, I most humbly beseech thee: and awaken every one of our souls thereby, to search and try our ways, and to turn unto thee by a timely repentance and amendment of our lives. Though we deserve to be cut off by the sword, which is unsheathed, as a *foolish people that have not known thee; sottish children that have no understanding; who are wise to do evil, but to do good have no knowledge*[a]: yet *spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy heritage to reproach*[b].

O thou God of peace, who didst send thy own Son among thine enemies, to make reconciliation between lost men and thyself, inspire our hearts, and the hearts of all those with whom we are at difference, with a love of peace; and incline us to hearken and consent to reasonable terms of reconciliation. And for that end root out of every one of our minds and hearts all pride and ambition; all inordinate desire of greatness and dominion; all covetousness and greediness of wealth; all false opinions, prejudices, and misapprehensions; all anger, passion and causeless jealousies, and especially all study of revenge; all rancour and bitterness; all hatred and malice; with whatsoever else is contrary to the doctrine and spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Possess us with the spirit of truth, and love, and brotherly affection. Make us tender-hearted, and to have compassion one towards another; to study to be peace-makers; to pray for peace; to seek those things which will make for peace; and not only to seek after it, but to pursue it to the utmost of our power. Direct to those expedients which will happily unite and tie us fast together; or if these miserable differences continue, and cannot otherwise be composed, go forth, O Lord, with our host: give wisdom and valour to our leaders, resolu-

[a] Jer. iv. 19, 22. [b] Joel ii. 17.

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tion and undaunted courage to our soldiers, and good success to all those enterprises which are undertaken for the common good and safety of these kingdoms. O God, let *us fall into thy hands, for thy mercies are great; but not into the hands of men, when they are wrathfully displeased at us*[c]. And if thou art pleased to crown us with victory, give us grace to use it with moderation, justice and charity. O that we may overcome likewise all temptations to bold and presumptuous continuance in our sins against thee; and be subdued by thy favour towards us to a serious study and care how to *lead a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*[d]; for the sake of Christ Jesus, the Prince of peace; whose *grace be with us all.* Amen.

In time of scarcity.

O God, who *turnest a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*[e], pour down upon the sinful inhabitants of these islands a serious sense of their own undeservings, and of thy righteous judgments, which thou hast sent upon them, that they may humble themselves before thee, and repent of their wantonness and riot, of their feasting themselves without fear, and hardening their hearts against the cries of the poor, of their discontent and repining in the midst of plenty, and their loathing the divine food of their souls; which thou hast justly punished with scarcity of bread in all places.

Make us ashamed, O Lord, and heartily sorry for these and all other our offences against thy divine Majesty. And as an earnest of better obedience for the time to come, dispose the hearts of those who are afflicted to submit with meekness to thy punishment; and preserve them from all murmuring at thy wise providence. Open the hearts likewise of those who are rich to show mercy to them, and comfort them in their miseries. The greater store of provision any have treasured up against this time of want, incline them so much the more to consider the poor and needy, and fear to oppress them. Enlarge their hearts in more abundant charity, by the advantage they make of this present scarcity. And when thou shalt have turned it into plenty again, Lord, make us all truly thankful,

[c] [2 Sam. xxiv. 14; Ps. cxxiv. 2.] [d] [1 Tim. ii. 2.] [e] [Ps. cvii. 34.]

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and soberly to use thy blessings, and to bring forth plentifully the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy name, and the eternal happiness of our souls and bodies, in that world where there is no want, but fulness of joy for evermore. Amen.

A prayer proper for Ember-week[f].

O God, *the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift*[g]; I am sensible of thy great grace in ordaining a succession of men to bless in thy name, and to instruct us in our duty. I am sensible of what moment it is that they should be wise and good themselves, who are to teach wisdom and recommend goodness and virtue to thy people. And therefore I most humbly beseech thee to inspire the bishops and pastors of thy flock with the spirit of wisdom and discerning, to make choice of such only to be stewards of the heavenly mysteries as "trust they are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office of serving in the sacred ministry of thy church."

And inspire likewise all those who shall be admitted to that service, with a great zeal for thy glory, and for the honour of our Saviour, and for the salvation of his people. Replenish them so abundantly with the knowledge of thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they may be apt to teach, skilfully divide the word of truth, rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments, catechize and instruct the ignorant, exhort and convince gainsayers, satisfy those that are in doubt, confirm those that are well resolved, comfort those that mourn, absolve the penitent, and convey blessings to all those who are committed to their charge.

And hear, I beseech thee, the prayers of thy whole church, which are now devoutly offered to thee. And stir up all the faithful to send up ardent supplications, that those whom our spiritual fathers now separate to any holy office, being the children of fastings and prayers, may be the more laborious and successful in the work of our Lord, and prove eminent instruments of enlarging his kingdom here on earth, and thereby of bringing many souls to his kingdom in heaven. For which I most humbly beseech thee to fit and prepare us all by the

[f] [Inserted in the later editions.] [g] [James i. 17.]

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ministry of thy faithful servants every where, for the sake of our great High Priest, Christ Jesus. To whom, &c. Amen.

A thanksgiving for any public or private mercies.

O God most high and blessed for evermore, who hast bestowed upon us the happiness to know and understand thee, that thou art the Lord of all, and that thou *exercisest loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth*, and that thou hast said, *in these things thou delightest* [c]: thou art to be worshipped and adored with my continual praises and thanksgivings, who am here prostrated before the throne of thy grace, oppressed with the great load of thy mercies and benefits, which call upon all that is within me to bless thy holy name. I have often acknowledged that thou art the author of my being; and that it is thy favour which hath made my life not to be a burden to me, as it might have been by innumerable miseries. And now I heartily renew those acknowledgments: and thank thy great goodness for my long continued health, ease, peace and plenty; or that thou hast mercifully relieved and supported me in any sickness, pain, trouble or loss of worldly goods that hath befallen me. Particularly I thank thee for thy late blessings which thou hast conferred upon me, notwithstanding my undeservings and high provocations, which I have any way given thy divine Majesty, to deprive me of all good things.

[Here mention the particulars in which you are privately concerned: and if it be the public mercy of ceasing a great contagion, proceed thus.]

Blessed be thy goodness, which hath preserved so many of us alive in the midst of a great mortality; and hath restored health again into the habitations of our neighbours. Blessed be thy sparing mercy, which hath *delivered us from the noisome pestilence; and when a thousand fell at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand, did not suffer it to come nigh our dwelling. Thou hast been our refuge and our fortress, our God, in whom we ought to trust for ever* [d].

[After a war is ended, some such words as these may be added.]

[c] Jer. ix. 24. [d] Ps. xci. 2–7.

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If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, may we all well say, if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Blessed be the Lord, who hath caused wars to cease: and made our enemies to be at peace with us[e]. *It is the Lord that stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people*[f]. *The Lord giveth strength to his people: the Lord blesseth his people with peace*[g].

[When plenty is restored, say,]

Thou hast visited the earth and blessed it; thou hast made it very plenteous. Thou hast crowned the year with thy goodness, and thy clouds have dropt fatness[h]. *Thou hast blessed our provision abundantly, and satisfied our poor again with bread*[i]. *Blessed be the Lord, who hath caused the former and latter rain to come down for us in their season; and filled us with the finest of the wheat*[k]. *We eat in plenty, and are satisfied: praised be the name of the Lord our God, that hath dealt wondrously with us*[l].

But, above all, thy great and glorious name is to be praised for thine incomprehensible mercy in thy Son Christ, whom thou hast sent unto us with better blessings, to be the mediator of our peace with thee, to heal all the diseases of our sinful natures, and to deliver us from the power of Satan, and of hell and death, and to restore us to an immortal life. Thanks be to thine infinite goodness, which hath taught us by him the way of truth and righteousness; and made him an offering for our sins; and raised him from the dead to the throne of glory in the heavens; and sent from thence the Holy Spirit, to enlighten our minds with the whole knowledge of thy will, and to shed abroad thy great love in our hearts, and to be the earnest of an heavenly inheritance, together with our blessed Lord, who is heir of all things, having the hosts of angels subject unto him, whom he hath appointed (blessed be thy name)

[e] Ps. cxxiv. 1, 2, &c. [f] lxv. 7. [g] xxix. ult. [h] lxv. 9, 11. [i] cxxxii. 15. [k] cxlvii. 14. [l] Joel ii. 26.

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for the guard and defence, the succour and help, of all his faithful servants.

I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast pardoned so many offences; and so graciously importuned me to return to my duty; and afforded so long time and space of repentance; and waited so patiently for my amendment; and continued to me constantly, as I must again confess, so many blessings which I have abused, or restored them to me after a short correction of my faults. I cannot wish for any other happiness, but only for an heart gratefully to resent thy love, and to delight to meditate continually on thy tender mercies; that so I may love thee more, and thank and serve thee better the rest of my days, and live in good hope to pass from all this happiness here to eternal bliss. And this grace thou hast likewise promised to bestow upon me; yea, I feel the motions of thy Holy Spirit in my heart, exciting in me a sense of thy goodness, and provoking me to love and to good works.

O my soul, never forget the loving-kindness of the Lord. Let his name be daily blessed and praised with a joyful heart, for *his goodness endureth continually*[m]. To him I ought to live, and not unto myself, for he is my Creator, and Saviour, and Comforter, who daily loadeth me with his benefits. Therefore I ought to glorify him both with my body and with my spirit, which are his. Accept, good Lord, of the unfeigned desires and purposes which thou seest in my heart, in all things to be conformed to thy will. And accordingly assist me always with the renewed influences of thy heavenly grace, that I may grow in spiritual wisdom and knowledge of my duty; and that I may heartily love it, and faithfully remember it, and give all diligence to perform it, notwithstanding any difficulties that I meet withal to oppose it.

Enable me to maintain a constant sense of thy divine presence, to reverence thy holy name and word, and to walk before thee in all humility, thankfulness, patience, heavenly-mindedness, and contentedness of spirit. And help me likewise

[m] Ps. lii. 1.

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to exercise all justice, charity, meekness, and forgiveness towards all men; and to live in a sober, chaste, and moderate use of all the good things of this world. Let thy fear always curb the disorders of my passions; and thy love be a spur to my endeavours; and the example of the Lord Jesus and all the saints provoke me to zeal and fervency of spirit, and the hope of eternal bliss: strengthen, encourage, and make me constant in all the troubles and hardships of this life, that, persevering in well-doing, I may finish my course with joy, and win the crown of righteousness, which he hath promised to all the faithful. Amen, Amen.

"Assist me mercifully, O Lord, in these thy supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servant towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, I may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

A short prayer for a student.

I look up unto thee, O Lord, *from whom cometh every good and perfect gift*[n], beseeching thee to direct, assist, and bless all the labours of my mind. Illuminate my understanding, O Father of lights, and lead me unto right apprehensions of all things. Endue me with that humility and soberness of mind which thou delightest to reward with more of thy gifts and graces. Bestow upon me a discerning spirit, a sound judgment, and an honest and good heart, sincerely disposed to employ all the talents which thou hast or shalt intrust me withal, to thy honour and glory, and to the good of mankind.

For which end, I beseech thee to excite my thirst after useful rather than much knowledge. And especially enrich me with the treasures of that inspired wisdom contained in thy holy Scriptures, which are able to *make me wise unto salvation*[o]; that, growing in understanding and goodness, as I grow in years, my profiting may be apparent unto all men; and I may give a comfortable account of my time to thee, my God, at the day of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

[n] [James i. 17.] [o] [2 Tim. iii. 15.]

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A prayer that may be used any time of the day when a person hath leisure to retire.

O Lord, the great Creator and Governor of all things, I prostrate myself before thee in the humblest adoration of thy incomprehensible Majesty, acknowledging that I depend entirely upon thee; praising and magnifying thy most glorious power, wisdom, and goodness, which are conspicuous everywhere; and rendering unto thee my most hearty thanks for all the benefits which thou hast so freely and undeservedly conferred on me. Thou art bountiful to the whole world: all thy works praise thee; and we, the children of men, ought more particularly to bless thee, and speak good of thy name, who have received singular marks and tokens of thy favour and grace above all the rest of our fellow-creatures. Thou hast made us after thine own image, and endued us with reasonable and immortal spirits; and given us a capacity to reflect on thee, the Author of our being, and to be like unto thee in wisdom, holiness, goodness, and truth. But, above all, I ought to remember continually that great demonstration of thy love in sending thy dear Son to live among us, to die for us, and to give us an assured hope of immortal life.

I love thee, O Lord: I renew the oblation which I have often made of my soul and body to thee: I wait upon thee still for what thou seest good for both: I hope in thy everlasting mercies, that thou wilt pardon all my forgetfulness of thee, and ingratitude unto thee. And I most earnestly implore the grace of thy Holy Spirit to preserve in my mind a powerful sense of thee, an ardent love to thee, and an holy care to please and obey thee in all things: that the very same mind and spirit may be in me which was in Christ Jesus our Lord; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and the fear of thee; the spirit of meekness, humility, purity, and charity; and that I may do thy will with such cheerfulness, zeal, constancy, patience, and perseverance as he did.

I thank thee, O Lord, for all helps and assistances of that good Spirit which thou hast already favoured me withal: that thou hast so frequently made good motions to my soul; inspired me with holy thoughts and devout affections; and in-

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clined and disposed my will many ways to the choice of that which is good. I thank thee for the many seasonable admonitions which thou hast given me, for the happy opportunities which have been afforded me for wisdom and virtue, for a good education, pious examples, faithful friends, and all other furtherances in the way of salvation.

I remember likewise, with my most grateful acknowledgments, what abundance of good things thou hast bestowed on me, from time to time, for my better accommodation in this present life. Blessed be thy name for my continued health, and food, and raiment. Blessed be thy name that my bones are not broken; that I am not groaning under the sorest pains; that I dwell in safety night and day; and that I still see my friends and acquaintance, and many other comforts round about me.

I thank thee, O Lord, for these and all blessings whatsoever that thou hast conveyed to me by the ministry of thy holy angels; unto whom thou hast given the charge of me. *O bless the Lord*, together with me, *ye, his angels, which excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word* [p]. And enable me every day, I most humbly beseech thee, O Father of mercies, to bless thee better, with a purer heart, and a more lively sense of all thy love, and a greater delight in thy divine service, and a forwardness to every good work.

And as thou hast preserved me hitherto this day, so bless me the remaining part of it: that, endeavouring sincerely in all my designs, words, desires, and actions to approve myself to thee, as thy good and faithful servant, I may, with a good conscience, present myself before thee in the conclusion of it; and, with the greater confidence of thy gracious acceptance, renew my praises and acknowledgments, and commend myself to thy blessing, and hope for the continued protection of thy holy angels, through Christ Jesus. To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A shorter to the same purpose.

I prostrate myself before thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, in all humility of soul and body. I acknowledge my depend-

[p] [Ps. ciii. 20.]

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ence upon thee, and thy constant care and providence over me ever since I was born: particularly this day, in keeping me hitherto from many dangers, and providing for me many good things, as well for the comfort and pleasure, as for the necessary support of this present life. Especially I thank thee for thy exceeding great love in the Lord Jesus, through whom thou hast given me good hope of better enjoyments in the life to come, by following that blessed example which he hath set us of all well-doing and contented suffering.

It is all reason, O Lord, that I should love thee, and entirely trust in thee, and most willingly serve and obey thee. Accordingly I here again dedicate myself both soul and body to thee. I vow myself ever to thy service. I hope still in thy great mercies, which have been so tender and so abundant towards me. I depend upon thee for what thou seest to be profitable for me. I refer myself absolutely to thy wise will; resolving to rest contented and satisfied in that condition wherein thou placest me. I believe thou orderest all things in heaven and in earth; and takest the greatest care of those that wait upon thee, and commit themselves unto thee, as I now do in confidence of thy goodness and submission to thy pleasure. Especially I rely upon thee for thy Holy Spirit, to preserve in me these holy purposes, and inspire me continually with good thoughts, and stir up in me heavenly affections, and increase and strengthen my faith and hope in thee, and assist my endeavours to do according to my pious resolutions.

Blessed be thy great goodness for what I have felt already; I thank thee for thy many illuminations from above; for thy grace so early preventing me; for the assistance and furtherance thou hast given me; and the happy opportunities I have met withal of improving myself in true wisdom and goodness. It is the earnest desire of my soul to grow more in both, and to be made perfectly like to my blessed Lord and Saviour: by whom all honour and glory be given to thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

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GRACES.

A grace before meat.

We acknowledge thy goodness, O Lord, in making this [plentiful] provision for us. Pardon our ingratitude for thy former mercies: and bless us with such a discreet and thankful use of these thy good creatures, that they may not hinder us in our duty, but better dispose us to do thee all faithful service in our several places; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Or this.

We look up unto thee, O Lord, who givest us life and breath and all things; beseeching thee to forgive us all our sins, and to make us such thankful partakers of these thy good creatures, that by a moderate use of them our bodies may be refreshed, and made more fit to accompany our souls in hearty endeavours to do thee faithful service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or this.

We renew our thankful acknowledgments unto thee, O Lord, for making again this merciful provision for us, who are unworthy of the least of thy favours. Add thy gracious pardon likewise: and bless the sober use of these thy creatures to the strengthening of our frail bodies. And endue our souls with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that we may return back unto thee the strength we receive from them in well-doing; and it may be as delightful as our meat and drink, to do the will of thee our heavenly Father; through Jesus Christ, &c. Amen.

After meat.

We return unto thee, O Lord, our hearty thanks for these and all other the like mercies bestowed upon us ever since we had a being; especially for the promises thou hast given us of eternal life, by thy Son Christ. Enable us, we beseech thee, to continue so patiently in all good works, that at last we may attain it. And bless thine universal church, these realms, the

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king, the queen, and all the royal family; and grant us thy grace, mercy and peace, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Or this.

Blessed be thy name, O Lord, for our continued health, and food, and raiment, and friends, and all other good things, whereby thou maintainest the comfort of this present life. Above all, we thank thee for thy love in Christ Jesus, and the hope thou hast given us by him of better things in another world: unto which we beseech thee to bring us by hearty obedience to thee all our days. Save thine universal church, &c.

Or this.

We thank thee, O Lord, that we are alive, and that we live in health, and peace, and the enjoyment of all good things that are needful for the support of this present life, and for the attainment of a better. Continue them, we pray thee, unto us: and continue in us such a thankful sense of thy love, that we may live unto thee, by whom we live. Save thy universal church, &c.

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JESUS

AND

THE RESURRECTION

JUSTIFIED BY

WITNESSES IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.

IN TWO PARTS:

THE FIRST SHEWING THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD;

THE SECOND, THAT IN HIM WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

Ὅταν ὁ Θεός τι ποιῇ, λογισμῶν οὐκ ἐστι χρεία.—St. Chrysost. in Johan. Hom. lxvi. [tom. viii. p. 397 D.]

[This title was prefixed by the author to the second edition of the work, published in 1703.]

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THE

WITNESSES TO CHRISTIANITY;

OR, THE

CERTAINTY OF

OUR FAITH AND HOPE:

IN A DISCOURSE UPON 1 JOHN V. 7, 8.

PART I.

[The original title to the first edition.]

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TO

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

GILBERT

[SHELDON,]

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN; AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL, &C.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE

To permit these papers to go abroad under your name, which are writ in defence of that most holy religion of which your Grace is the prime minister in this kingdom. They contain an explication but of a very few words; yet in them lies the whole evidence for the Christian cause. I hope I have done something to clear their sense, and to illustrate divers other passages in the holy books. I have, at least, done my endeavour, and opened the way to the plainest and most apostolical method of asserting the truth of our religion. They that come after may supply the defects and rectify the mistakes which they find in this account that I have given of the witnesses to Christianity: who speak so fully and with such authority, that it is a matter of just wonder there should be any infidels in Christian countries.

We can find no other cause of it, but that, instead of considering upon what grounds our faith relies, they scornfully presume that it hath none. If they would but lay aside their lightness, and become serious, and if they would be so humble as to think it is possible they may learn of one of the despised ministers of Jesus Christ; I doubt not they would, with a little study, soon see him to be so great a Lord, that they ought to have a due respect to the meanest of his servants for his sake. Nay, they would not envy to them

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such high dignities as your Grace worthily holds in the church of Christ. For the Lord himself is honoured in the honour that is done to his ministers: and thereby they are made capable to do him still better service; and with the more authority to promote the honour of his religion.

Of which how much your Grace hath deserved by your prudent care and vigilance for its preservation, and by the countenance and encouragement you give to those that labour in its service, posterity perhaps may be better judges than this present age. Though that cannot be so ungrateful as not to acknowledge your great munificence and bounty; of which there are such public and lasting monuments, as declare you to be primate of all England, not only in the dignity of your office, but, which is more, in the generosity of your spirit.

Long may our sovereign enjoy such a wise counsellor, the Church such a prudent governor, learning such a liberal patron and benefactor; and when, through mere age, you must resign and exchange it for a higher and better place, your see such a successor.

As for myself, if your Grace will be pleased to pardon this address, and reckon me in the number of those that reverence your virtues as well as your greatness, I shall not doubt but my design in this work will obtain your Grace's approbation; and that your known candour will pass a favourable judgment upon the weak endeavours of

the Church's and your Grace's

affectionate servant,

SY. PATRICK.

Covent Garden,
June 6, 1676.

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1 St. John v. 7, 8.

For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

An introduction to the ensuing discourse, showing the scope of it.

It is not my design in this discourse to explain and establish the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which several great writers have inferred, with much appearance of reason, from the remarkable difference there is between those words whereby St. John expresses the unity of the first three witnesses, and those whereby he expresses the unity of the last; but to settle the faith and hope of Christian souls in the Lord Jesus, which is the true scope of the apostle in this part of his epistle, though in no treatise that I have met withal it hath from hence been distinctly and fully represented.

That this is the drift of the apostle's discourse, and ought to be the intention of mine, will be very apparent if we go but back so far as the fourth verse of this chapter, and from thence take our rise for that argument which I purpose to pursue. To know that we are *born of God*, and so shall be his heirs, is a

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thing in which above all others we are most highly concerned. That we may have therefore a certain character of one divinely descended, St. John lays down this general mark of him whereby he may be known, that *whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.* By this a Christian is to be tried, and hereby he discovers himself what he is, whether the child of God in name only, or in deed and in truth. If when he meets with any thing in this world that would seduce or affright him from his duty, he not only defies it and sets himself against it, but makes it yield to his resolution of steadfast obedience to God's commandments, (which every man, he says, in the foregoing verse, that loves God will certainly keep, and not think them *grievous* neither,) it is a plain demonstration that he is dear to God, and hath his very Spirit in him.

Now, next to this, there is nothing more necessary and desirable to be known, than how we may obtain this great and matchless victory over every thing in the world that opposes our Christian resolution; and so undoubtedly approve ourselves 'heroical persons,' as they were anciently called that are born from above. And here also the apostle lends us his assistance, telling us in the latter end of that fourth verse that we must achieve it by faith: *and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* So courageous, so powerful, so successful is an hearty lively faith, that you see he calls it by the name of *victory* itself. If we believe steadfastly, we shall tread the world under our feet, and easily despise all its temptations, as those valiant worthies did, whose example another apostle sets before us in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews; a portion of Scripture which he that means to be a conqueror should think he can never read too oft.

But there is a farther inquiry remaining, which every body will be apt to make; and that is, what this faith may be which is so victorious and triumphant. And therefore the apostle takes care to satisfy us in this matter also; when he tells us, verse 5, it is nothing else *but to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.* To be heartily persuaded, he means, that that great person, who was born of the virgin Mary, and was known by the name of Jesus, and overcame the world so gloriously, was indeed sent from God unto us, and owned by him as *the express image of his person;* that we may as infallibly depend upon

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the truth of what he hath said, either of himself or concerning us, as we can upon anything of sense or reason; by which we think ourselves bound to guide and determine our resolutions and actions in this life.

But still after all this, there is one thing more that we cannot but desire to be very sure of; without which all the rest will stand us in no stead, but we shall flag and despair of success, viz. *that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.* This if it be not well proved by substantial arguments, we can have no solid faith, and so no victory; and so no sonship, no hope in another world. The apostle therefore, that he may serve us in bringing some evident demonstration of this so important a truth, tells us in the next words (verse 6), that Jesus did not only say he was God's Son, and confidently affirm himself to be the divine person so long looked for to come into the world; but that he came with very sufficient and unreprovable witnesses of it, viz. the WATER, the BLOOD, and the SPIRIT; which made this truth good to all those who considered their testimony. If the first of these, WATER, should not be thought great enough to merit belief, yet the BLOOD joined with it adds great force to its persuasion. Or if both these seem too weak, yet this last, the SPIRIT, the apostle doubts not is so strong to conquer men's minds and make them believe in Jesus, that he says *the Spirit is truth;* that is, such an undoubted proof that Jesus was what he pretended to be, *the Son of God,* that no man can be deceived who relies upon it, and no man can refuse, if he give heed to it, to rely and depend upon such a witness.

Now this was a thing notorious in those days, and needed no proof at all, the whole country of Judæa could witness it, that *he came by* (or rather *with*) *water, blood, and the Spirit.* And therefore the apostle doth not go about to make this good, that there were such witnesses, (it being a matter confessed,) but rather repeats it over again, as the strongest proof of his divine authority; adding moreover therewithal, that there were three other witnesses, who by their concurrent testimony would unanimously justify this truth. *For,* saith he, in the words I have chosen to explain, *there are three that bear record* (or *witness*) *in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are*

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three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. As if he had said, You cannot reasonably doubt of that which we preach concerning Jesus, if you go but to those three witnesses to which I have sent you, *the water, the blood, and the Spirit;* for they all affirm with one mouth that he was the *Son of God.* And as they testify this to you upon the earth, so there are three other witnesses also who declare it to you from heaven, to whom I first direct you; and then to those three that here on earth, as I have told you, bear their record to him.

There are not a few copies of the New Testament, it must be confessed, which leave out the testimony of these three witnesses that speak from heaven, not reading the seventh verse; as is noted not only by Socinus and his followers, but by Erasmus, Grotius, Curcellæus, and our learned Selden, whose collections to this purpose far exceed all former observations. But yet this last named great author hath said so much[a] to justify the antiquity of our present reading, and to keep the seventh verse in the place wherein it now stands, that I make no question these are the words of St. John, concerning the three heavenly witnesses, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;* and accordingly I shall, in the first place, appeal to their testimony for the confirming of this truth, and for the supporting thereby of our faith, that *Jesus is the Son of God.*

And if anybody shall say, What need is there of this in a Christian country? There are no infidels sure among us; nor are we in danger to turn Pagans, Turks or Jews, who blaspheme the Lord Jesus! I shall not labour to stop their mouths by casting reproaches on others, nor complain of the apostasy which some think they have reason to lay to the charge of too many in this present untoward generation; but desire them to take their answer from St. John himself, in the thirteenth verse of this very chapter; where they will find that he thought it not unnecessary *to write these things to them that believe on the name of the Son of God; that they might know how happy a thing it was to be a Christian, and that they might believe* (i. e. continue to believe) *on the name of the Son of*

[a] L. 2. de Syned. cap. 4. num. 4. [tom. i. col. 1247.]

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God. And I may modestly suppose, that what he thought good to assert here with so much care and exactness, it will not be thought an unprofitable diligence if I study to expound and enlarge for the benefit of believers. It will be some satisfaction to me, however, to have had it in my heart to do some honour to my Saviour, and to have endeavoured to make any part of his holy book more clearly understood; especially if what I write shall increase the faith of any Christian soul, and fill it with an assured hope in Jesus, by abiding constant in this belief, that *he is the Son of God.*

That being the thing which is to be proved by these witnesses, it will be necessary to search a little into the meaning of the phrase before we take their examination about it. And it must be confessed, that though Jesus be the eternal Son of the Father, "God of God, begotten of him before all worlds;" yet this is not always meant when he is called *his Son*, which is a name in the holy style, not so much expressing his nature as his high authority and sovereign power, which he hath received as the Mediator between him and us from God the Father Almighty. So I think we are here to understand the apostle, who under the name *Jesus* comprehends all that belongs to his person, both his divine and human nature, and affirms that this person hath sovereign authority committed to him by God the Father of all, who hath given him commission, and deputed him in his stead to declare his mind, and acquaint us with his will; and having by himself purged our sins, promoted him to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, as that great King and Lord of all, by whom we are to be governed now, and to be judged at the last day. Sure I am in many places of the holy scripture which say *he is the Son of God*, the meaning is expounded in other places to be this, that *he is the Christ* or the 'anointed' of God. That is, Jesus, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, rose again from the dead, and afterward appointed St. John and the rest of the apostles to preach those things to all nations which we read in the holy Gospel, was indeed sent of God (according to the ancient prophecies) with his own power and authority, and is now by the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, to be our

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King and sovereign Lord, whom we are all to obey, and from whom alone we are to expect all our rewards.

And there is great reason to think that these are phrases of the very same import, here in St. John, if we compare but the first verse of this chapter with the fifth. In the former we read, that *whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:* in the latter he tells us, that *he who overcometh the world believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.* It is the very same faith, no doubt, whereby we are *born of God,* and whereby we *overcome the world;* and therefore it is the very same thing to believe that *Jesus is the Christ,* and to believe that *Jesus is the Son of God.* Express it how you please, either of these ways, this alone is the faith which can regenerate a man and put a divine Spirit into him; that is, make him a conqueror over the world as Jesus was. Let the second chapter of this Epistle, ver. 22, be consulted also, and there you will find that *Christ* and *the Son* are terms equivalent, and have the same signification. To which if you add some places in the Evangelists, they will make you see this more evidently. When St. Peter made this confession [c], that Jesus was *Christ the Son of the living God,* there is no more meant, one would think, by those words, *the Son of God,* than what the other word, *Christ,* includes: because, when our Saviour would have them know that it was not fit for them, as yet, to divulge this truth which St. Peter confessed, he only charges his disciples (ver. 20.) that they should *tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.* And if this be not ground enough to conclude the identity (as we speak) of these words, the other evangelists will put it out of doubt; for St. Mark makes the confession of St. Peter to have been no more than this, *Thou art the Christ,* viii. 29. And St. Luke relates it not much otherwise, when he says that he acknowledged our Saviour to be *the Christ of God,* ix. 20. To be the *Christ,* or to be the *Son,* the *Christ of God,* or the *Son of God,* according to the understanding of these divine writers, is the very same; and in these places nothing different. And indeed, it is very probable that St. Hierome's opinion is true, who believed that the apostles were not yet such proficients as to understand the eternal generation of

[c] Matth. xvi. 16.

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our Lord Jesus from the essence of the Father. For we find them very ignorant of divers things that were easier to be learnt than this, which if they had known, they would not have expected to see him settle his throne upon earth; nor doubted of his resurrection from the dead, and many other things, as they did.

But the comparing of two other places will make this still more manifest. In Matt. xxvi. 63, we read that the high priest adjured our Saviour to tell him if he were *the Christ, the Son of God.* They all expected one to appear under this character: this was the common title of that great person who they believed would shortly come. But they meant no more by it than one appointed by God to be their king, as is apparent from St. Luke, who relates that question barely thus, *Art thou the Christ? tell us*[d]. And after our Saviour had made that answer, which we read both in him and St. Matthew, he tells us they all replied again, *Art thou then the Son of God?* which was no more than to say, Must we take this for confessed then, that thou affirmest thyself to be sent, anointed, and set over us by God? Wilt thou stand to that which thou just now ownedst, when we asked thee that question? For without all doubt the chief priests and the Scribes intended nothing by that phrase, *the Son of God,* but what was comprehended in the other, *the Christ.* And therefore when Pilate, upon their accusation, examined him upon the same matter, he asks nothing else but this (as this apostle St. John relates), *Art thou the king of the Jews*[e]*?* which is the plain interpretation of the word *Christ.* For that is not the proper name of any person, as Lactantius rightly observes[f], but a "name of power and dominion," signifying him to be their sovereign: "for in this style," says he, "the Jews were wont to speak of their kings, whom they called Christs, or God's anointed."

Once more, when they were enraged at our Saviour for calling himself the *Son of God* (as St. John tells us, chap. x.), he justifies himself by a reason which signifies no more but that he called himself *the Christ,* the anointed of God, as you may read, ver. 34, 35, 36. If they were called *gods* in old time,

[d] Luke xxii. 67, 70. [e] xviii. 33.
[f] Nuncupatio potestatis et regni; sic enim Judæi reges suos appellabant. L. 4. cap. 7. [tom. i. p. 287.]

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to whom the word of God came [g] (i. e. who received commission and authority from God to be the judges and rulers of his people), then it could be no offence, much less a *blasphemy*, for him whom God had *sanctified* (i. e. set apart and anointed to this office of being their Lord and King) to *call himself the Son of God*. For so he was by his place; and there was no need he should say anything of the divine nature that was in him. Well then, to be the *Son of God* and to be *the Christ*, being but different expressions of the same thing; and the word *Christ* signifying *anointed*, one set apart to an high office, and (in its eminent sense) that person who was to sustain the place of God in this world, to be the king of Israel, yea the governor and ruler of all mankind; we must conclude that when the apostle says here, *Jesus is the Son of God*, his meaning is, that he is the Holy One of God, the person whom he sanctified by the unction of the Holy Ghost, and sent into the world; to whom he hath now given all power in heaven and in earth, that every knee should bow to him as the sovereign Lord of the world; whom we are to hear and obey and depend upon in all things.

For this is the style, you may observe, of the Old Testament (from whence you may learn the rise and original of this manner of speech), which calls those kings who derived their authority immediately from God by the name of his *sons*. Because, when they were anointed by his order, they were made what they were not before, and begotten (as they spoke) again: and being created by God to their new dignity, they are therefore called his sons. The first time we meet with the phrase is in the story of the first king of Israel, where Saul is called, as the words are in the Hebrew, *the son of one year in his kingdom* [h]: because there was but a year passed since the time of his unction; by which he was born God's vicegerent, and (as you read) *turned into another man* [k]. And indeed we find this imitated in ethnic writers, who call the day their emperors entered upon their reign, their "birthday." So we read in Spartianus, that Adrian, being informed by letters that Trajan had named him for his successor, caused the "birthday of his adoption" to be celebrated. And two days after, hearing of his

[g] [Ps. lxxxii. 6.] [h] 1 Sam. xiii. 1. [k] x. 6.

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death, he ordered they should keep the "birthday of his empire[k]." But I do not intend to launch out of the holy story, where we find this more plainly delivered in the history of the succeeding kings of Israel. For when the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians, the Ammonites and other neighbouring people with their princes, conspired (after they had been conquered by David) *against the Lord and against his anointed;* resolving to cast off their yoke; the Psalmist shows[l] how vain and idle their attempt would prove, because God had appointed him, whom he sent a prophet to anoint, to be his king. This decree of God he avers, and openly declares, that the Lord said unto him, *Thou art my son, this day* (i. e. when he anointed him) *I have begotten thee*[m]. So that to rise against him was to war with God Almighty, whose *son*, that is, vicegerent, he was in those countries. And therefore if they were well advised he exhorts them all to go and *kiss the son*[n], i. e. submit themselves, by that token of humble subjection, to him who had his authority immediately from God: nay, was *his first-born*, the most eminent prince, that is, that ever he made[o]. And therefore he was the prime type of our Lord Christ, to whom these words are applied, because he was the *Son of David*, that great king, who was to *reign over them for ever*, as the angel said[p]. And if you pass from hence to the next king, Solomon, (who had a particular unction also, and in whose reign was prefigured the glorious kingdom of our Saviour), you will find that God says by a prophet concerning him, *I will be his Father, and he shall be my son*[q]. Which words are a promise to make Solomon king, and settle him on the throne of his father David. So he understood it, as appears by the speech which David made, not long before his death, to all the great men of his kingdom, where he tells them that, as Jesse had many sons, *yet God liked him only to make him king over all Israel*[r]. So of the many sons which the Lord had given him, *he had chosen Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord*[s]. As is evident, saith he, from those words of God spoken by Nathan, *I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his*

[k] Natalem imperii instituit celebrandum. [cap. 4. inter Hist. Aug. Script. p. 21.]
[l] Ps. ii.
[m] ver. 6, 7.
[n] ver. 12.
[o] Ps. lxxxix. 27.
[p] Luke i. 33.
[q] 2 Sam. vii. 14.
[r] 1 Chron. xxviii. 4.
[s] ver. 5.

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Father[t]; i. e. made choice of him to be king of Israel in thy room, and as I have been to thee, so I will be to him. Thus Solomon, one would think, interpreted these words, when he prays God, who had made good one part of his promise, to perform the other also: *Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me reign in his stead* (as much as to say, *made me thy son*): *now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto my father be established*[u]; that is, of being *a Father to me*, now that I am become thy son, and set by thee over a people, *like the dust of the earth in multitude.*

By this time I suppose it will be no wonder to any intelligent person that these kings are called the *sons of God*; who did not only govern in that country, which was called, it is well known, *God's land*, and the inhabitants whereof were his *peculiar people*; but were appointed by his special direction, and *anointed with his holy oil*[x], and had, as it were, their being and birth from God, who promoted them to *sit upon his throne*, and to be *kings for the Lord God*[y]; so that the kingdom itself is called in that book *the kingdom of the Lord*[z]. And the judges also in the courts of that kingdom are said to exercise the *judgment of the Lord* and not of man[a]; that is, to sit there in God's stead, to do men justice: and because of this great power and trust committed to them by him, are called, as you heard, *gods, and the children of the Most High*[b]; whose deputies they were, and for whom they judged. And therefore it is the less wonder, that when this great Prince came among them, to whom *all judgment is committed*, and who hath *all power in heaven and in earth*, and is *Lord of all*, and *appointed by God the heir of all things*, he is called by the same name that they were. If there were no other reason for it, his office would give him a title to it: because he is the *Lord's Christ*, anointed by God to the highest dignity and government under him, not only over that country, but over all nations on the earth; who, by believing on him, were all to be made *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*[c]. But to show his most excellent greatness, he is called *the Son of God*, with two marks of

[t] ver. 6. [u] 2 Chron. i. 8, 9. [x] Ps. lxxxix. 20. [y] 2 Chron. ix. 8. [z] xiii. 8. [a] xix. 6. [b] Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6. [c] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

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his preeminence above all other who have had that name: first, he is called ὁ υἱὸς, *that Son*, that eminent King, the King of kings; like to whom none ever was. For, secondly, whereas those *sons of the highest*, spoken of before, were to *die like* other *men, and to fall like one of the princes*[d], in other countries, he is called the Son τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος, *of that God who liveth*[e]; that is, of the immortal eternal God: and by consequence is like his Father, an everlasting King, *of whose kingdom*, as the angel told his mother, *there shall be no end*[f].

Thus the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who understood this language well enough, hath discoursed in the first chapter: where he proves that Jesus is the *Son of God* in a more eminent sense than any angel in heaven, according to those ancient prophecies before named, concerning David and Solomon, as you read ver. 4, 5: from whence the Jews learnt to call the Messiah, who they confess is in those places mystically spoken of by that name of the *Son of God*. Which the apostle there shows is the greatest name of excellence, and signifies the highest honour and dignity; such as God hath conferred upon no other. And then he proceeds to show, that according to other prophecies which speak of his supereminence, *his throne is for ever and ever*[g]. For *God*, who is *his God* (in a peculiar manner loving and rewarding him), *hath anointed him with the oil of gladness* (preferred him, that is) *above all that partake of kingly dignity*[h]. He hath made him indeed his *first-born, the Prince of all the kings of the earth* (as St. John speaks[i]), to whom we are to submit ourselves with the greatest devotion of spirit, and from whom we may then expect protection, blessing, and the noblest rewards. For he is the long expected *Son of God*, who excels all other that were ever called by that name; the *King* of inconceivable majesty, whose splendour could not so much as be foreshadowed by Solomon in all his glory. Thus Nathanael, I observe, puts these two expressions together in his confession of our Saviour, out of a vehement affection redoubling his words, *Thou art that Son of God, thou art that King of Israel*[k].

This is the business upon which we are to examine these *witnesses*; we are to consider what they say to this point, that

[d] Ps. lxxxii. 7. [e] Matt. xvi. 16. [f] Luke i. 33. [g] Hebr. i. 8.
[h] ver. 9. [i] Rev. i. 5. [k] John i. 49.

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the Lord Jesus was sent from God as Moses had formerly been; only Moses as a *servant*, but he as a *Son* (according to what you read, Hebr. iii. 5, 6), with a fulness of authority, with all the power of God; so that we may confidently rely on every thing that he hath said, as the very mind and sense of God. This if we can hear them speak, they are witnesses so beyond all exception, that we cannot choose but reverence him, and receive him, and obey him, and put our trust in him, and rejoice in his royal favour and love evermore. For the first three are no less persons than the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*. Whose gracious assistance let us humbly implore, that this and all other our works may be begun, continued and ended to the glorifying of his holy name.

A PRAYER.

O Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift, illuminate my mind in these meditations, that I may be able to enlighten others, and lead them into a good understanding in all things. Guide and direct my thoughts, that I may reason and discourse aright. Shine into all our souls by the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, that we *seeing the Son may believe on him* [m]: and "being made thy children by adoption and grace, may be daily more and more renewed by thy Holy Spirit." Settle in our souls that mighty faith, whereby we may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph over the devil, the world, and the flesh. Strengthen it every day by constant meditation on those things which thou, O Father, Son and Holy Ghost, hast so many ways declared to us; that it may grow still more victorious, and we may feel the happy fruit of it in greater joy and triumph of spirit, in assured expectation of the crown of righteousness, which thou hast promised to all faithful souls.

O that none of the enticing allurements of this world may ever more deceive us, and steal away our hearts from our true happiness; nor any of the troublesome passages of this life ever hereafter dishearten us, and divert us from the pursuit of it: but the faith of Christ may so entirely possess our hearts, as to keep us steadfast and upright in the midst of all the temptations, of what kind soever they be, that assault us! And looking up unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may still say with true resolution of spirit,

[m] John vi. 40.

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Thou art the Son of God most high, thou art the King of incomprehensible majesty, thou art the Lord of all. We will constantly adhere to thee, as thy faithful subjects; we will follow thee in faith and love, and patient obedience to the very death: and hope that as we feel, by thy power in us, we are the children of God, so we shall be heirs, heirs of God, joint-heirs with thee, O blessed Lord; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory and dominion for ever. Amen.

CHAP. II.

Concerning the witnesses in general, and the testimony of the Father in particular.

If any man urge us to receive a thing which is new and strange, we either turn away our ears if we take him for a frivolous person, or else require him to show us good evidence for what he says if he seem to be wise and serious. And the more importunate he is to be believed, the more earnest we are to know what he hath to show for himself, and to call for his proofs; in which if he fail, or they come not home to the purpose, he is so far from gaining any credit with those who examine them, that they prove a very considerable argument against him. Especially when he pretends to come from God, and to bring us messages from heaven, we all expect the clearer and diviner demonstrations, before we can resign our mind unto him. For that which is to make all things credible must have very pregnant reasons accompanying it to win credit to itself. If that which stands as a reason for all that a man says be not itself grounded upon the clearest and most undeniable, it turns against him and proves nothing but a confutation of all that it was brought to assert.

Now Jesus pretending not only to this honour of *coming from God*, (which is a sufficient argument for any thing that he says in his name,) but also to an higher dignity of being *his Son*, (in the highest sense of that word, "begotten of him before all worlds,") and so of being privy to all his secrets, of lying in his very bosom, and being invested with a power equal to the Almighty's; if he and his apostles (who affirmed the same of him after he was put to death, and that as a malefactor) should be defective in their proofs of so lofty and

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weighty a pretension, he would be rendered of all other the most contemptible, and they become men most ridiculous, for obtruding him on the world in such a quality, upon slight or no demonstrations. For the greater and more concerning any assertion is which we propound to men's belief, the stronger and more plentiful arguments they justly expect to induce a persuasion. Which if they be wanting, it is so far from being a fault not to surrender their souls to that proposition, that it is a virtue to refuse admittance, and they could not excuse themselves from a great guilt, should they be so easy as to let it find entertainment. Nay, it is a commendable piece of caution and wariness to suspend our belief in a matter of very great importance, though there be some considerable proofs offered; if they be not proportionable to the weight of the thing unto which we are to deliver up no less than our souls.

Let us see therefore what evidence this follower and favourite (as I may call him) of Jesus produces and lays before us, to make good this, which he preached for a certain truth, that he is no less than the *Son of God*. Let us hear what his *witnesses* say, for so he calls his proofs, to this great point, and consider whether they speak so home to it that we cannot reasonably refuse to believe it. The office of a witness is to give in all the evidence he can for the clearing of any matter in question, for this very end, that thereby the controversy may be decided upon his credit. When the apostle therefore calls for his witnesses, who are ready, he saith, to justify this which he asserts, if any body make a doubt of it, or be not well settled in this belief; his meaning is, that it relies upon such solid grounds, that no man shall be able to deny Jesus to be the only begotten of the Father, the Christ of God; unless he can disprove the authority of his witnesses, which he was sure would never be in any man's power to do, they were of such known verity. If this be called in question, whether *Jesus be the Son of God* or no, if any list to bring it to trial, and examine it before the bar of impartial reason; St. John here offers his witnesses, faithful and just, of undoubted truth and integrity, who shall make it good: so that if you will hear them, and consider what they say, and then give sentence according to their evidence, you must needs judge that he is what he said he was, the Son of God most high, and quit him

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in your consciences of all the calumnies and aspersions of the Jews, who said he was a deceiver of the people.

Now the witnesses that he brings, you see, dwell in two very distant places: three of them in the heavens, and the other three in the earth. From these two several regions they give their testimony; the former from above, the latter here beneath. For when the apostle says that there are *three* μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, *testifying or bearing witness in the heaven,* and as many that do the same ἐν τῇ γῇ, *on the earth;* the meaning is not that the first three gave their testimony to those that are in heaven, and the last three to those that are on earth; but that the first three witnesses are themselves in heaven, and the other three were on earth, and so from thence they gave their testimony to Jesus. They that dwell in heaven delivered their testimony and justified this truth from above, and the other residing on the earth did there speak to it and make it good. Let us first hear these supreme and heavenly witnesses, and take under examination what they declare concerning him whom we acknowledge for our Lord, and what authority he hath, according to their testimony, to exact all obedience of us, as he is the *Son of God.* And first of all, let us begin with the witness of the Father; for the truth is, that as he is the first and the beginning of all things, so he did first testify of Jesus; and by his voice from heaven proclaimed him to be his Son, before he or any else was so bold as to affirm it. And as he, being the first, did bear witness to him before any of the rest spoke a word; so, according to the number of these heavenly witnesses, he gave his testimony of him three times.

I.

The first time was when our Saviour began to appear publicly among the people, coming out of his privacy *from Nazareth of Galilee to be baptized of John in Jordan*[a]. He had no need indeed of that baptism, as John affirmed, and our Saviour did not deny; but as became one who had put himself into the state of our meanness, and appeared in our sinful flesh, he would omit nothing that belonged to the duty of a pious person. And therefore he would have the Baptist do to

[a] Matth. iii. 13. Mark i. 9.

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him as he did to others, knowing that he exercised this ministry by the appointment of God, whose institutions ought to be reverenced, and to whose will all good men ought to conform themselves. Now he had no sooner given this example of humble obedience, but, as he came out of the water, God the Father of heaven declared him in express terms to be what St. John here says he was, *his only Son*; which testimony of his is recorded by no less than three evangelists, as you may find if you read Matth. iii. 17, Mark i. 11, Luke iii. 22, who tell us that he saw the heavens at that time opened to him, and a divine glory come from thence and settle upon him, which was followed with a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* So St. Matthew reports the words of God the Father, (from whom this voice came, it is plain, because he calls Jesus *his Son,*) or, as they may be rendered more emphatically, This is that Son of mine, that beloved one, (whom the prophets promised, particularly Isaiah xlii. 1, God would send to them, as Tertullian well expounds it,) who is most dear to me, and shall declare my whole will and pleasure. There is a mark set before it, *ἰδοὺ*, *lo*, or *behold!* that we may all attend and listen diligently to this voice; for now *the word of God came to him,* (as he speaks in another place, I told you, concerning those who were called *gods* under the old law, John x. 35,) and in an audible manner authorized him to begin to act as the Christ of God, whom he had anointed, as you shall hear, with the Holy Ghost, just at this moment when he declared him his Son by this voice from heaven.

Which, if you carefully observe it, is expressed by the other evangelists in such a manner, that we may understand it was directed to himself; as that commission which was sent him from heaven, to give him power to exercise the office of God's supreme and only minister in this world, in whom alone he was well pleased, and in none else but by him. For St. Mark says the voice was in these words, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Who plainly tells us that he spake *to* Jesus, (and not merely *of* him,) that he might be confident he was the person whom God had now *sanctified and sent into the world.* And so St. Luke hath recorded it more fully and expressly, *Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well*

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pleased; as if he had said, Thou art the person to whom I have a favour above all others. I have anointed thee above all thy fellows; none that have had this name are so dear to me as thou art, to whom I commit my authority, and invest with my power, and intrust with all my mind and will.

Now because we all suspect private revelations, and think it no sufficient ground to believe one that says God spake to him, unless he can bring some other very credible person besides himself to attest that he also heard it, or be able otherways to demonstrate it; God was pleased therefore, not only by other means to verify this, but so to direct St. Matthew's pen, that he hath as good as told us that the voice which was directed to Jesus himself (telling him he was his Son) was uttered likewise in the audience of John Baptist, a person famed for his sanctity, reverenced by all the nation of the Jews, and acknowledged to be a prophet. Though it was delivered, I believe, in those words and syllables wherein St. Mark or St. Luke have set it down, for as the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit descending[b], so the voice which accompanied it spake in all likelihood unto him; yet it being heard also by John, who had baptized him, and who saw all that went before it, as he himself declared, it was as if God had said to him, *This is my beloved Son*, &c., and therefore so St. Matthew relates it. The Father Almighty by this voice awakened the attention of the Baptist, and bade him, as it were, mark it, that this person to whom he now spake was the Messiah; who now entered upon his office, being declared the Son of God, and should increase and grow (as he presently after discerned, John iii. 30,) till he came to be declared, by the resurrection from the dead, *the Son of God with power*, (as St. Paul speaks, Rom. i. 4,) that is, with all the power belonging to his office, of Lord of all things, the great King of heaven and earth.

Till this time he knew no more of the Christ but that he was coming, God having ordered him to make way for him; and that he should immediately appear, and be so much superior to him[c], that he should not be worthy to be one of his meanest servants. His countenance he was not acquainted

[b] Matth. iii. 16. [c] Ib. 11.

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withal, nor could he say, This is the person, when he met with him, as he himself confesses[d]. But thus much he was told by him that sent him to baptize, as he there declares[e], that on whom he should see the Spirit descend and remain, he should conclude that person was the Messiah, from whom they might expect the gift of the Holy Ghost, which had been so long a stranger to their nation. And accordingly, having some intimation of him from the Spirit, as soon as Jesus offered himself to receive his baptism[f], immediately after he was confirmed in his belief that this was the Christ, by the fulfilling of the former signs[g]; and thereupon publishes it openly to all in these words: *I saw and bare record* (i. e. gave my testimony of him) *that this is the Son of God*[h]. So God himself taught him to call our Saviour; for it should seem, by the words of St. Matthew, that he had this further ground to believe it, and so was furnished with greater ability to testify it; that he *heard* the voice from heaven as well as *saw* the Spirit descend upon him. Though the Father spake the words to Jesus, yet it was in the presence and hearing of this person (who was *sent from God to be his witness*[i]) and as if he had said to him, *This is my beloved Son:* mind what I say; go and testify that this is he in whom I delight above all others. Thou mayest be sure of it, for I tell thee so, who gave thee all the authority thou hast. And accordingly you read that he went and did his office, for which he was sent; that is, *he bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me*[k], which he repeats in the same chapter as his *record*[l] in behalf of our Saviour, on two other occasions[m], to let them know that the person of whom he gave this testimony before he was baptized of him was now come, and exalted to a far higher dignity than himself, being a more *mighty* person, as the rest of the evangelists speak, no less than the *Son of God.* This he means by being *preferred before him*, appointed by the Father of all to an incomparably more excellent office, which he entered upon after the preaching and baptism of John; who began indeed his ministry before Jesus, but it was

[d] John i. 31. [e] Ver. 33. [f] Matt. iii. 14. [g] John i. 32.
[h] Ver. 34. [i] John i. 6, 7. [k] Ver. 15. [l] Ver. 19.
[m] Ver. 27 and 30.

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not because he was greater, but rather because he was less, and came to prepare his way, who was, as he acknowledges, Πρῶτος, the *first* of the two; not only in regard of his divine nature, but in regard of his sublime office, into which he was now put, by being pronounced *the beloved Son of God*, by this voice from heaven.

Which the devil himself, one would think, heard and understood to be such a testimony concerning Jesus as committed the greatest ministry to him, and was a divine warrant to go in God's name to the world, as Moses, after the angel spake to him out of the bush, did to the Jews. And therefore, when immediately after this our Saviour was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, the devil would have had him give some proof of his divine power, as Moses did, or rather show himself by a greater evidence than Moses gave to be greater than he: that he might be satisfied Jesus was no less than the voice declared him, *the Son of God.* So you read Matt. iv. 3, that the first thing he said to him was, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* As much as to say, Thou art now in a starving condition (for he had taken no provision with him into the wilderness, resolving to depend on that God who had expressed such love to him as to own him for his Son); here is a fit opportunity for thee to exercise thy power, if thou hast any, by bidding these stones turn into loaves, which will be a greater wonder than Moses his bringing manna out of the clouds, and show indeed that thou art God's Son. To which our Saviour answers, as you read in the next verse, out of Moses himself[n], and tells him he might learn from that story of the manna, there was no need he should employ his power, which God had committed to him, on this fashion; for, as the Israelites were maintained in the wilderness after a miraculous manner, so might he; who would prove himself to be his Son, not this way, by turning stones into bread, but by trusting in God, and leaving him to provide for him as he thought good. That is his meaning when he says, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* And so in the following temptations he still held to this, that he was sufficiently satisfied he was God's Son, and would

[n] Deut. viii. 3.

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not demand any farther proof of it, but such as he himself would give, who at last ordered the *angels to go and minister unto him*[o]: to carry him food, it is like, and congratulate this his first victory over the enemy of mankind. Who was not so dull but he learnt by this and many other things afterward, wherein he felt his power, that this voice from heaven was no vain rumour, no empty insignificant sound, but a true report of the very mind of Almighty God: which he himself was forced to proclaim as loudly as any body else.

For you find him, not long after this, with a whole legion of his companions, acknowledging Jesus to be *the Son of God most High*, and with humble prostrations *worshipping him*, whom he had the confidence before to persuade to worship himself, *crying with a loud voice*, for God's sake, *that he would not torment him*[p]. Nay, he was sensible, one would think, of this as soon as ever that temptation was ended: for you read that immediately after it, *Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee*[q], and there, at Capernaum, met with a man that had *a spirit of an unclean devil*, who *cried out with a loud voice, saying, I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God*[r], which is thus interpreted[s]: The devils came out of many, crying out, and saying, *Thou art Christ the Son of God: for they knew that he was Christ.* But our Saviour would not be beholden to them for their suffrage; it was sufficient that God had declared him his Son, and that John Baptist attested as much, and that the *works which he did* (particularly his dispossessing them of their strongest holds) *bare witness of him.* And therefore he imposed silence on them, as the Evangelist there tells us; both because they might, by their loud acclamations to him, give the Pharisees occasion to calumniate him, who were too forward to say he had confederacy with the devil; and because it was not fit this should be published in so many words, no, not by his apostles[t], till after his resurrection and his ascension to the throne of his glory, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; which demonstrated he was completely *made both Lord and Christ*, as the apostles then openly declared[u].

But till then it seems to have been the work of the Father

[o] Matt. iv. 11. [p] Mark v. 6–8. Luke viii. 28. [q] Luke iv. 14.
[r] Ver. 34. [s] Ver. 41. [t] Matt. xvi. 20. [u] Acts ii. 36.

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alone, or principally, to bear witness of him: for John Baptist was his *voice crying in the wilderness*, and the works our Saviour did were those which his *Father had given him to finish*, and the Spirit was the *finger of God*, which pointed men to him, as I may so speak, and bid them receive him as his *beloved Son in whom he was well pleased.* And shall we not receive this for the greatest truth, when God himself says it? shall we not let him dispose of our faith? is not he the truth? is it possible for him to falsify or deceive? or do we imagine he cannot declare his mind, and speak to us as we do one to another? He that formed the mouth, cannot he speak? is his power less than ours? can we manifest what we would have and make it understood, and cannot he in the same manner make us know his will and pleasure? If his express testimony then be of any force, here you have it, by an audible voice from heaven; and John the Baptist, whom the Jews, the enemies of our Saviour, durst not but reverence, bare record to him thereupon, that *Jesus is the Son of God.*

Now if any one should say that the certainty of this relies upon the testimony of one single person, and that it is possible he might hear amiss, (though there be no colour for such an objection, he being a prophet, and acknowledged so to be by those who did not acknowledge our Saviour, yet) that this great truth might not depend upon the credit of John Baptist alone, though a man well acquainted with the manner of divine revelations; the Father was pleased a second time, and in the audience of more witnesses than one, to declare again what he had said before, that he was his Son.

II.

This was in the holy mount, as you may read in Matt. xvii. 5, and in the two following Evangelists, Mark ix. 7, Luke ix. 35, where the Father of all was pleased to declare, in the same terms as he had done at his baptism, and with an audible voice, which astonished those that heard it, that he was his *beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased*[x]: to which declaration he added this command, *Hear him.* That is, be assured that what he says to you is the truth; and what I speak to the world, it shall be by his mouth. Now this voice was ut-

[x] Matt. xvii. 5.

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tered in the hearing of no less than *three* persons, whom our Saviour had selected from the rest of his company to attend him unto this mountain, where God appeared to bear witness to him. Of which three, this disciple St. John was one; who therefore might, with the greater confidence, urge here the testimony of the Father, which he himself heard. And unless they to whom he writes this Epistle could find him false, and guilty of forgery in any other relation, they had no reason to call in question his honesty and faithfulness in this report: which is the more considerable, because there were others who heard it as well as he, who might be appealed unto and asked about it.

One of those who were there present and heard it together with him was St. Peter; a man timorous enough, and apt to deny a truth, and therefore of no such courage as to support a lie with the danger of his life. Who, writing to Christian people, as St. John here doth, commends *this voice* to them as a sure witness of that truth which he was shortly to seal with his blood; and professes his own sincerity in the relating of it. Read with attention 2 Pet. i. 14—18, where he tells them that our Lord having shown him he must shortly die, (when it is no time to dissemble with God or man,) he would endeavour to settle in their minds such a solid ground of faith, that, when he was gone, they should stand unshaken, if they did but remember it: and that it was not a thing he had received by hearsay, much less a devised story that had been forged in his own brain; but a matter of which he was an *eye and ear-witness*, of which he, and others also, had a certain, clear, and perfect knowledge. For they saw then the glory wherein Jesus was, and they heard the forenamed voice come from that *excellent glory*, which could be no other but the glory of the Father. Then and there, in that mount, *Jesus received from the Father honour and glory*, when there came forth from the mouth of God this voice, in all their hearing, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Here it will be necessary to take notice, that the voice, as all of them relate it, was directed not to him, but to those who were there present with him. None of them say that it spake thus, *Thou art my beloved Son*, &c. (according as St. Mark and St. Luke report the former voice) but they unanimously

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tell us in these four places, which I have named, that it was delivered in the other form, *This is my beloved Son*, &c.: as if he spake to the company that attended him, and bade them observe that here he owned this person to stand in such a relation to him as he and John Baptist had professed. The former voice might come for his sake; but there being no need of his further satisfaction, this was for theirs; that they might steadfastly believe, and that they might be competent witnesses of him, and persuade others to the belief of that, which upon their own certain knowledge they could affirm was the very mind and will of God. I shall have occasion hereafter to make a farther inquiry into both these testimonies which the Father gave to his Son Jesus, and therefore I shall now dismiss them with some observations concerning this, which will much help to illustrate it, and add to the force of it.

The first is, that our Saviour, having at this time sequestred himself, with three of his apostles, into an high mountain to pray to God, was *transfigured before them as he was praying*, so that *his face did shine as the sun*, and his very garments were all *glistering*[y]. Τὸ μέλλον μυσταγωγῶν (as St. Greg. Nazianzen speaks[z]), 'showing beforehand what he was to be hereafter;' and making an introduction to the *glory* in which he should shine in the high and holy place at the righthand of the Father, where he makes perpetual *intercession* for us. For to *shine as the sun* is a phrase expressing something belonging to celestial majesty in the kingdom of the Father[a]. The white and splendid garments also, it were easy to show, were proper to kings and those who waited on them[b]. The ministers and royal attendants in the heavenly court were wont always to appear in such radiant brightness, though short of this wherein our Saviour now began to shine as the King, ere long, of heaven and earth. For so St. John says, *We beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father*[c]. And St. Peter, when he speaks of this, says, *We were eyewitnesses of his majesty*[d].

Of which that they might be assured this was a true repre-

[y] Matt. xvii. 2. Luke ix. 29.
[z] Orat. 35. p. 575. [ed. Ben. Orat. xxix. § 19. tom. i. p. 537 E.]
[a] Matt. xiii. 43.
[b] Rev. iii. 4.
[c] John i. 14.
[d] 2 Pet. i. 16.

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sentation, you may observe, secondly, how they saw a very great glory appear and approach towards them, called by St. Mark and St. Luke, simply *a cloud*, but by St. Matthew, *a bright cloud*[e]: which had usually been the token of the presence of the divine Majesty. And therefore it is called by St. Peter, in the place before named[f], *the excellent or magnificent glory*: and the voice which came out of it is said to come *from heaven*[g], because it came forth from the presence of God, of which this *bright cloud* was the visible sign. For so he appeared anciently to the Israelites in a cloud that had a splendour or shining light in it, like to the hottest fire, which sometimes brightly glistered and sometimes was obscured. So you read that *the Lord descended in fire upon* the famous *mount Sinai*[h]; and a little after, how the *glory of the Lord dwelt upon* that *mount, and the cloud covered it* (i. e. the glory of the Lord) for the space of *six days*, and then *on the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of that cloud*; and the *aspect of the glory of the Lord was as fire that burnt or glowed with great ardency in the sight of the children of Israel*[i]. That is, on the seventh day, that glory was revealed and broke forth out of the cloud, wherein for six days it had been wrapped up and hidden from their sight. And so you read in the xlth chapter of that book, that as soon as Moses had reared up the tabernacle for the constant habitation of this divine presence, the *cloud covered it*, and rested upon it without, and the *glory of the Lord*[k] filled it within, which is presently after explained to be *a fire*, which by night appeared *upon the tabernacle* to guide them in their journey. This is that bright flame which frighted them when they murmured against Moses, called *the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud*[l], threatening to devour them if they were not more obedient. Such a glory, but more pure and more delightful to behold, there was now upon this *holy mount*, as St. Peter calls it: to make them apprehensive that now they were in the presence of God, who, as he did on that mount (to speak in the words of Tertullian) initiate their forefathers in the religion of Moses, by showing his glory and by his

[e] Matt. xvii. 5. [f] Ver. 17. [g] Ver. 18. [h] Exod. xix. 18.
[i] Exod. xxiv. 16, 17. [k] Ver. 34, 35. [l] Exod. xvi. 7, 10, and Numb. xvi. 42.

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voice; so here on this[m] was going in the same manner to give testimony to them concerning his Son Jesus, and to confirm them in the belief of whatsoever he should teach them.

For, thirdly, this was not *muta nubes*, as the same Tertullian there speaks, 'a dumb cloud,' a silent glory; but a voice came out of it, which was *novum Patris testimonium super Filio*, 'the Father's new testimony concerning his Son.' In which testimony he was pleased to apply those very words to Jesus which had been spoken by Moses concerning a prophet whom he had bid them look for after him. For in the xviiith of Deuteronomy[n] he tells them from God himself that there should be raised up to them a Prophet like unto him, into *whose mouth* the Lord would *put his own words*, and *who should speak all that he should command him*[o]; *unto him shall ye hearken*[p]: as much as to say, Be sure you attend to his words, and give obedience to them. Now these very words and syllables, *Hear him*, are, by that God who made that promise to Moses, spoken in this place to the disciples with a manifest application to Jesus: clearly denoting him to be the person whom Moses foretold the Lord their God would send to declare his mind unto them, as he himself already had done. And that this was really the voice of God, as much as that voice which spake to Moses, we have the greater reason to conclude from this following, which is the fourth observation.

That Moses now stood by and heard it: and from thence learnt a great deal more than he knew when he wrote his book; that this person of whom he spoke was more than *a prophet;* being the *Son* of God's dearest love. For these words which declared him so were spoken there where he was present: who durst not contradict them, as sure he would have done, had he not known them to be the very voice of God and no delusion.

I need not enlarge this; because the evangelists tell us so plainly that not only he appeared in glory in talking with our Saviour upon this mountain, but Elias also accompanied him, which is next to be considered. Who being a great prophet might pretend as fairly as any other man to be the person designed by Moses in the words forenamed; and yet consented by his silence to the same undoubted truth, that the prophecy of Moses was not till now fulfilled, but had its utmost completion in

[m] "Agnosco formam loci," &c. l. 4. adv. Marcionem, c. 22. [p. 437 A.]
[n] Ver. 17. [o] Ver. 18. [p] Ver. 15.

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Jesus. And indeed this voice from heaven, making such an open proclamation concerning Jesus, before him that gave the law, and before the chiefest of the prophets who had asserted it, and being heard by them with the profoundest silence, without any contradiction; it did as good as tell the apostles that they might be assured this was he of whom the law and the prophets had spoken, whom they were now to give ear unto; and that the law and the prophets must from henceforth give way to an higher revelation from God by this Jesus. If this had not been true, we cannot but think that this great zealot Elias, who had been always so *jealous for the Lord of hosts* [q], and this trusty servant of God, Moses, who was so *faithful in all his house* [r], would have presently entered their protestation against it; and required the apostles, in the name of God, to give heed only to their voice, but not to this. Which now might the rather be believed to come from heaven, because these inspired persons reverence it, and dare not venture in the least to speak against it; when they were highly concerned so to do, if it had not been the voice of God.

And if any one shall ask, how these disciples could tell that these two were Moses and Elias, whom they never saw; I think Theophylact hath well resolved it: that they knew them not by their faces, but by their discourse. Certain it is that persons living in far distant countries, known to others merely by their works and manner of writing, have, after a little converse at an unexpected meeting, been challenged by the names that their books carried, without the help of any noted character in their face to distinguish them. Nothing is more common than the story of Erasmus, whom his friend here in England greeted by his name, after a few repartees passed between them, though he had never seen him, and little thought then to embrace him [s].

[q] 1 Kings xix. 14.

[r] Numb. xii. 7.

[s] [The famous saying of Erasmus to his unknown antagonist in conversation at the Lord Mayor's table, *Aut tu es Morus aut nullus*, together with More's ready repartee, *Aut tu es Erasmus aut diabolus*, rests on the authority of Hoddesdon (Life of Sir Thomas More, chap. 5. p. 28); and is repeated by Thomas More, the chancellor's great-grandson (Life, &c. p. 82, 8vo. Lond. 1727): from whom Jortin relates it in his life of Erasmus, but with the sceptical remark, *Sit fides penes auctores* (vol. i. p. 163). He is wrong however in citing Stapleton as an additional authority for it. An anecdote apparently identical, but wanting the name of Erasmus, is related of More in the MS. life first published by Wordsworth, Eccles. Biogr. vol. ii. p. 95.]

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Now we are expressly told by all the three Evangelists, that *Moses and Elias talked with Jesus;* and by St. Luke, that their discourse was concerning his *decease* or departure out of this world, *which he should accomplish at Jerusalem:* and consequently, it is very probable, of the glory that was to follow it by his resurrection. Which conference the apostles hearing, they might easily know, though not ἀπ' εἰκόνων, 'by their pictures,' which many of that nation held it unlawful to be made, yet ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων, 'from their words and discourses' (wherein either Jesus or they, before it was done, had occasion to mention their names or their offices, or to describe their persons) that they were none else but those two men who then appeared to them. And it is possible, as Theophylact adds, that Moses might say, I acknowledge thee to be the person whose death I prefigured by the Lamb which was slain at the Passover: and Elias might join with him and say, Thou art he whose resurrection I did likewise foreshow, by calling again the widow's son to life. Some such kind of discourse we may reasonably conceive passed between them, whereby they discovered themselves to be, the one the lawgiver, the other the noblest of all the prophets; who now came to wait upon Jesus and acknowledge that he was greater than they; as the voice from heaven presently testified, which declared him the *beloved Son of God,* to whom now all must attend, as they had formerly done to them.

And therefore it is very remarkable (which is the last thing I shall observe) that no sooner was this voice heard, but Moses and Elias vanished and were seen no more. As much as to say, that Jesus alone was now to be *heard;* the law and the prophets were gone, and had nothing to do but only to serve him. So St. Mark relates, that *suddenly when they had looked round about* (after the hearing of this voice) *they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves*[t]. They turned their eyes every way to look for Moses and Elias, but there was no further news of them. Nay, St. Luke tells us, that in the very uttering of the voice from that heavenly glory they disappeared. So those words ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν plainly signify, *while the voice was speaking, Jesus was found alone*[u]. The cloud out of which it came covered them and took them into it. At the same time it opened itself to manifest him and

[t] Mark ix. 8. [u] Luke ix. 36.

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to obscure them; that it might be evident the voice spake of him alone and none else; there being nobody but he to be seen by his disciples when it came forth from the presence of God. So you read in all the Evangelists, that the cloud which appeared *overshadowed them* (viz. Moses and Elias), whereupon *the disciples were afraid* (as St. Luke tells us), *as they* (that is, Moses and Elias) *entered into the cloud*[u]: imagining, it is like, that it would approach nearer, and spread itself over them; who dreaded to enter into it, as they saw those two persons did. But there was no danger; it only parted Moses and Elias from Jesus, and left him alone, and then came the voice out of that cloud, where Moses and Elias were with God, giving their assent to what it said, *This is my beloved Son, hear him. Him*, I say, *non Mosen jam et Eliam*, (as Tertullian, I now observe, interprets it,) "not Moses and Elias; who were shown," as his language is, "in the prerogative of brightness, and then dismissed, as being now discharged both of their office and of their honour[x]."

Thus I have briefly explained the second testimony which God the Father gave him in the audience of three of his disciples; who had a vision also, at the same time, of the glory wherein he was to shine after his departure out of this world. To which testimony our Saviour would not have those disciples as yet to add theirs, but to keep this as a secret till he was *risen again from the dead*[y]. It was fit for the Father alone to speak *now*, from whom they were to learn what Jesus was; that being fully satisfied *they* might be the better able to speak of him *then* upon their own knowledge; who had been eye and ear-witnesses of the *honour and glory which he received from God the Father, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* And *this voice* (St. Peter, I told you, openly avers), he and others *heard*, when they *were with him in the holy mount*[z].

But if any one should be so suspicious and distrustful as to think that the testimony of three persons is not sufficient to beget belief in us of such a wonderful thing as this is, that God declared Jesus to be his Son, though there is no just reason to doubt of any thing that is established out of the mouth of but

[u] ix. 54. [x] L. 4. adv. Marc. c. 22. [p. 436 B.] [y] Matt. xvii. 9. [z] 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

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two good witnesses, yet such was the condescension of God the Father Almighty, that he was pleased a little before our Saviour's decease, which Moses and Elias spake of, to give his testimony to him again, and to declare this more publicly, which was shortly to be proclaimed in all the world.

III.

For this third voice, which the Father was pleased to send from heaven to bear witness to him, was not heard by so few as two or three, but by a great multitude of people; which makes our belief of this truth to rely still upon surer grounds. For you read in John xii. 1, 2, &c., that a great company of people having heard what a miracle our Saviour had wrought upon Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead a little before at a neighbouring town; flocked out of Jerusalem to meet him, as he was coming thither to the feast of the Passover. And being convinced that he was *that king of Israel* whom the Lord by the prophets had promised to send in his name, they met him with palms of joy and triumph in their hands, and with the loudest acclamations of praise in their mouths; spreading their garments also in the way (as other Evangelists tell us) to do him the greater honour, and wishing him all prosperity in his new kingdom. In this crowd, or among the rest of the people who were come to worship at the feast, there were *certain Greeks*, (as you read ver. 20,) who were desirous *to see Jesus*, whom the multitude thus magnified; and, it is likely, wished to have some proof given them that he was such a person as fame reported him.

Now the first thing our Saviour answers to those who presented them to him (which must be diligently noted) is that ere long he *should be glorified*. But first he must take the cross in his way, and then the glory he should attain thereby would be exceeding great! for his death would produce most precious fruit, and be the means of enlarging his kingdom, and bringing innumerable such gentiles as these were unto God[y]. And thereupon he persuades his disciples[z] to adventure their lives, according to his example, for the good of mankind; which would redound also very much to their own honour. As

[y] ver. 23, 24. [z] ver. 25, 26.

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they might see already in Moses and Elias (who appeared, St. Chrysostom thinks, for this end among others, to strengthen and encourage their Christian resolution in their sufferings[a]), but should be more fully satisfied when they saw him ascend to that glory after his sufferings, of which they had beheld but a shadow when those two illustrious persons came to wait upon him. A difficult work indeed it was, at the thoughts of which he himself could not but be something sad[b], and wished, according to the inclinations of nature, there were some other way, if God pleased, to deliver mankind. But since he had sent him into the world for this end, that he should lay down his life for our redemption, he resolves presently to submit to God, and desires only this one thing of him, *Father, glorify thy name*[c]. As much as to say, I know thou art my FATHER, and since it is thy pleasure, to which I will always submit, behold, I offer myself now to be an instrument of thy glory by my passion, as I have been hitherto by my preaching, and the works thou hast done by my hands. I am content to receive the glory which I expect, and just now told my disciples I shall receive, in this way of humble suffering thy will and pleasure. I am desirous thou shouldest first be glorified; and if my death will serve that end, I am ready to part with my life, for I know thou wilt be much more glorified by my resurrection and ascension to heaven. There is no reasonable doubt to be made of the truth of this interpretation; for they *glorify God* most remarkably who die for the testimony of the truth[d]. It is a great honour to him that they love him more than their lives, and will take his word for their recompense in an invisible world. This our Saviour himself calls, *God's being glorified in him*[e]; and therefore I make no question he desires here that his Father's name may be glorified by the same means.

Now to this humble request of his God the Father replies by a voice from heaven, saying, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* You remember what St. Peter says in the place often cited already, that our Lord, by the former voice from heaven, *received honour and glory from God the Father*[f]. And there is as much cause to think that in this there was the

[a] Παραμυθήσασθαι τὸν Πέτρον καὶ ἐκείνους δεδοικότας τὸ πάθος. Hom. 56. in Matth. [tom. viii. p. 567 A.]

[b] ver. 27.

[c] ver. 28.

[d] John xxi. 19.

[e] xiii. 31.

[f] 2 Pet. i. 17.

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same design to do him honour by a declaration of the glory he should shortly receive at the right hand of God. The very connexion of these words with the foregoing will not let us expound them otherwise. For having told his disciples, the *Son of man should shortly be glorified*, but first he must *glorify God* by his passion, and then he doubted not but *God would glorify him with himself*[g]; that is, by the very same means glorify both himself and his Son, who had glorified him: Yes, says God himself from heaven, *I have both glorified my name* (by what he had done for Jesus, and by him), *and will glorify it again*, (by that which remained still to be done.)

And indeed, (1.) it did him a great honour that God was pleased to return any answer to him, who had before called himself *his Son*[h], and had just now addressed himself to him as his Father; calling upon him twice by this name, *Father, save me from this hour*[i]: *Father, glorify thy name*[k]. It was as much as to say, he owned the relation, allowed his pretences, and intended to justify them more and more by his divine approbation. For (2.) the answer itself is a plain promise of the honour he would confer upon him hereafter by his resurrection and exaltation; when he *again glorified himself* by glorifying the Lord Jesus. You read expressly in the foregoing chapter, that the glory he had gotten *before* was by glorifying of his Son; for he says the sickness of Lazarus was *for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*[l]. And therefore when he says he will *glorify himself again*, the meaning is, that as they had *seen his glory*[m], in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and in all the other miraculous works which Jesus had done, for which the people gave him glory[n]; so he would glorify himself more by the resurrection of Jesus himself from the dead, and by his exaltation to an heavenly kingdom. For it was the *working of the might of his power*, (as the apostle St. Paul speaks,) *which he wrought in Christ, when the Father of glory raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*[o]. Now he *glorified his Son Jesus* in-

[g] xiii. 32. [h] x. 36. [i] xii. 27. [k] ver. 28. [l] xi. 4.
[m] xi. 40. [n] Luke v. 26; vii. 16; xix. 37. [o] Eph. i. 19–21.

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deed (as St. Peter speaks[o]), *and gave him a name which is above every name;* that every knee should bow to him, and every tongue confess him to be the Lord: but it was *to the glory of God the Father*, as St. Paul tells us expressly[p]. Hereby he *glorified his own name*, as by this voice from heaven he said he would; whose power, goodness, and wisdom will be for ever magnified and celebrated with the highest praises by the whole Christian church, for setting such a glorious Prince over them, who is not *ashamed to call them brethren*, and yet hath *all things put in subjection under his feet*[q]; that he may protect, succour and bless them here and eternally.

Now by making this promise to the Lord Jesus, of glorifying himself by glorifying him in this manner, he plainly bare witness to him, that he was what he pretended to be; very dear to him, his *only begotten Son*, and no deceiver, as they falsely and blasphemously said, who were loath to be governed by him. They ought presently to have glorified God by honouring his Son, and acknowledging him for their Lord and Master: who had such power with God already, that he would *give him whatsoever he asked*[r], and was shortly to receive greater, even *all power in heaven and in earth*[s].

For this voice, you may observe, was uttered at such a time, and so loud, that the people who stood by heard it[t]. Those who were at some distance indeed, hearing only the sound, thought it had been a clap of thunder; but they who were nearer heard it so distinctly, that they were of opinion *an angel spake to him:* God, that is, by the ministry of an angel. For what is said in one place of Scripture to be done by angels, who are his principal servants, is in another said to be done by God. As *the angel of the Lord*, we read Acts vii. 30, *appeared to Moses in the bush*, and in the next verse it is the *voice of the Lord* which from thence is said to come to him. In like manner the *angel* is said *to speak with him in mount Sinai*, ver. 38; where we are told, Exodus xix. 20, *the Lord came down and called Moses up to the top of the mount*, and there spake to him, as here he did to our Saviour; who tells the people it was not for his sake that God spake now to him, it was for theirs; whom he would have to know that when he

[o] Acts iii. 13. [p] Phil. ii. 9–11. [q] [Heb. ii. 8, 11.] [r] John xi. 22. [s] xvii. 1, 2. Matt. xxviii. 18. [t] ver. 29.

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was *lifted up from the earth* (by hanging upon the cross, which was a step, contrary to all men's opinion, to his exaltation in the heavens) *he would draw all men to him;* bring even the Gentile world into subjection to him, and bow their hearts to acknowledge his divine authority, which the Jews opposed. He needed no further confirmation of this truth himself, who knew how dear he was to God, and that he would *glorify his name* in him; but that his disciples might be more confident of it, and the people more inclined to believe it when they heard it preached, God spake the very same now in the ears of a great many, which he had done before to him and a few besides in the former voices from heaven.

It is true indeed, he is not called here *God's beloved Son,* in express terms, as he is in the other places. But this is so plainly supposed, and strongly inferred, as I said, from the voice which now spake, that it puts the matter out of doubt as much as the former. If he had falsely and proudly laid claim to this high relation to God, whom he calls his Father, we may be confident God would never have honoured him with such an answer; but either have been silent, or said the quite contrary: telling him before all the company that he would not glorify himself by preferring, but by putting to shame, such an one as he, who thus arrogantly took upon him to be the Son of God. It is contrary to all reason to think that God would stoop to *seek the glory* of any person (as our Saviour expresses the honour he had done him[u]), but one who stood so nearly related to him as to be his Son, and therefore worthy to be glorified by him again and again, until he had fully *judged,* as he there speaks, between him and his adversaries; who denied him to be the Christ, but was pronounced by God to be the Prince of life.

To conclude this, you may note that not long before God spake in this manner from heaven to them, our Saviour had said, That they *had not heard his voice*[v] at any time. John the Baptist had, and so had three of his disciples. And therefore John bare witness of him; *whose testimony,* he says, *was true*[w]; though he did not stand in such need of it as if his credit could not be supported without it. No, he appealed to him merely because they had such an high opinion of him[x];

[u] John viii. 50. [v] v. 37. [w] ver. 32. [x] John v. 33, 34.

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otherwise he *had a greater testimony than that of John*[x], which was not only the *works that he did, which testified of him that the Father had sent him;* but *the Father himself who sent him* (note this, for he appeals now to what the voice from heaven said) *he had borne witness of him*[y]. And if they had had any goodness in them, they would have received him *whom the Father sent*[z]. When did he send him, but when he spake by that voice from heaven? which now he utters once more in other words for their greater and fuller satisfaction, when many of them were assembled together; that they, who had not hitherto, might hear his voice as well as Jesus himself and his apostles; and be awakened hereby to attend to what the other witnesses of him should say, especially after he was risen from the dead.

I should pass now to the examination of one of them, were it not fit, before I part with this, to take notice of a tradition which runs among the Jews, concerning this way of revelation *by a voice* from heaven; which they say was very usual in those ages. "The doctors deliver (so their words are in the Babylonian Talmud) that from the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi, the Holy Ghost was taken away; but yet notwithstanding they had the ministry of the *Bath-col*[a]," i. e. the "daughter of a voice." By that name they call this way of revelation, because they say it was not a full and strong voice which they heard, but a voice coming out of another voice, and heard when it was gone. Just as sparks, say they, are called *Beneresheph*, "the sons of an hot coal," because they leap out of the fire; so is this called the "*daughter of a voice*," because it resulted from a voice, and came, as it were, out of the womb of it; being a kind of echo after something that was spoken, which they could not understand; but only caught hold of this tail, as I may call it, and conclusion of it. And they would have us believe that, as under the first temple

[x] ver. 36. [y] ver. 37. [z] ver. 38.

[a] In the title Sanhedrim, cap. 1. [§ 13. apud J. Cocceium, opp. tom. ix. p. 187. Quoted also by Lightfoot, Hor. Hebr. in Matt. iii. 17. vol. xi. p. 80. On the subject of the Bath-col, or oracular voice, which, according to the Talmudical authorities, constituted the fourth kind of divine revelation, there are treatises of great research, in which the instances here cited will be found, by Vitringa, Obs. Sacr. tom. ii. p. 388 sqq., J. A. Danz, in Meuschen's Nov. Test. ex Talmude illustratum, p. 350 sqq., and J. H. Haner in the Thesaurus Theologico-Philologicus, tom. ii. p. 956 sqq. fol. Amst. 1702.]

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they had the benefit of prophecy, *Urim and Thummim*, and the Holy Ghost, so this succeeded them under the second temple, and was proper to that age of the world: being then only in use, when all the other were wanting. Hence many Christian writers of these latter times have fancied that God therefore declared Jesus to be his Son by a voice from heaven, because it was the only way wherein he then communicated his mind to the Jewish nation. Paulus Fagius I think was the first that started this notion of the *Bath-col*: which was a *præludium*, he imagines, "to that true, divine and heavenly voice which was to speak to them indeed from heaven; that is, our Lord Jesus Christ: to whom the Bath-col itself gave testimony, when it said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. But its name shows it was not the true voice from heaven, but a mere type, signification and testimony of that true voice and word of God which was to come shortly and speak to them: to whom alone this Bath-col told them they must all hearken." Thus he writes upon the Chaldee Paraphrase [b]. And he had said the same before in his notes upon the fifth chapter of *Pirke Avoth*, where his words are, that "God would accustom the world a little by this beginning to that true heavenly voice, our Saviour Christ, who was to follow; in whom hereafter the Father would be heard [c]."

But I think there is reason to doubt of all that the Jews say about this matter: their brags being many times beyond the truth, and devised to obscure the glory of our Saviour; who it is most likely had that honour done him now by these voices from heaven, which was not usual in those days: for he himself tells them, as I observed before, *Ye have not heard his voice at any time* [d]. As for that which they pretend, that this *Bath-col*, or "daughter of a voice," was peculiar to the times of the second temple, it is so far from truth, that it is contradicted by some of themselves; who find instances of the contrary in the holy books. God called out of heaven to Abraham, every body knows, by his angel [e]. And Maimonides observes [f], that he spake to Hagar and Manoah's wife; though neither of them, he says, had any thing of the spirit of pro-

[b] In Exod. xxviii. 30. [s. p. fol. Argent. 1546.]
[c] [p. 134.]
[d] John v. 37.
[e] Gen. xxii. 11, 15.
[f] More Nevoch. part 2. cap. 42. [p. 311.]

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phecy, but only heard the *Bath-col:* which interposed, if we could believe others, in the case of Thamar; and often whispered to Moses, as the writer of his life in many places affirms. Nay, they tell us in the eleventh chapter of the forenamed title in the Talmud, that Nebuzaradan heard this *Bath-col* (before the destruction of the first temple) bidding him make a fresh assault upon Jerusalem, and not be discouraged in his attempt, nor fear the fate of Sennacherib: "For the time is at hand that the sanctuary shall be destroyed, and the temple burnt."

But that there was any such thing under the second temple, I see no ground at all to believe. It is far more probable that they have devised a number of such stories as we read in their books, merely to gain some credit and reputation to their doctors. Can any man of sense imagine that God would bid Jonathan hold his hand when he was beginning to paraphrase upon the prophets; saying to him by a voice from heaven, "Who is this that reveals my secrets to the sons of men?" And that he, like a bold fellow, stood up and said, "I am the man who undertake it for thy honour, and not my own." And yet Elias Levita has the confidence to tell us, in his Preface to these paraphrases, that as Jonathan was going to do as much for the holy writings (as they call them) as he had done for the prophets, he was absolutely prohibited by another voice from heaven, which said, "Is it not sufficient that thou hast divulged the mysteries of the prophets, but thou wilt prostitute also the secrets of the Holy Ghost?" So the good man desisted, and durst not do the angels any further service; who came to listen to him as he was expounding the prophets. Which is as true, I make no doubt, as all the rest: and we may as well believe the "earth quaked for forty mile together," when he began his paraphrase, and that if a fly did but sit upon his book in which he wrote, "fire came down from heaven and destroyed it," leaving the book untouched, as believe a syllable of these voices speaking from heaven to him, for they have all the very same authors. Who having got this by the end, know not when to have done with it; but tell us for the honour of R. Chanina, who saw the destruction of the last temple by Titus, that a voice came from heaven, which said (as David Ganz reports it in his chronology[g]): "The whole world is sustained for the sake of

[g] Ad. An. 768. [p. 88.]

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R. Chanina my son." A very likely matter, that he should lay an obligation on so many, and nobody know it but this obscure writer. Why did not all the world follow him, as they did Jesus, if he were God's Son, and they so much indebted to him? This is but a wretchedly dull counterfeit of what they had read of our Saviour, who was God's Son, *upholding all things by the word of his power* [h]. And so are the other tales they tell in the Talmudical title so often named, chapter the first, of a *Bath-col* which came from heaven as the wise men sat in council at Jericho, saying, "There is one here who is worthy that the divine Majesty or Glory (by which they mean sometime the Holy Ghost) should rest upon him, as it did on Moses; but the age wherein he lives is not worthy of that favour." Whereupon they all cast their eyes on Hillel, a famous man among them. And of another voice as they were sitting together at Jafne, which said the very same words again; and turned all their eyes towards R. Samuel the less. And, to name but one more, R. Judah, the holy doctor, they would have it believed, was assured by this voice from heaven, that his prayer was heard, just as our Saviour's was in the place I have before opened. For when he was dying (and it was not many days before our Saviour's death, that he prayed in those words, *Father, glorify thy name*) he "lift up his ten fingers and said, Lord of the world, it is known to thee that I have laboured in the law with my ten fingers, and have not received the least advantage thereby, no not in my little finger. May it please thee that I may have peace in my rest." And then out came the *Bath-col*, saying those words of Isaiah, *He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds* [i]. Which, together with all other of the same kind, deserve to be put under no other title than that of the *Jewish fables* (mentioned by St. Paul [k]) or *old wives' tales* [l], wherewith little children are wont to be entertained; being invented, it is likely, in imitation of the gospel story, to adorn and support the ruinous doctrine of their rabbins, and to bring it into some esteem with their sottish posterity.

But we may as well believe the idle tale which the factious Donatists told concerning the father of their sect, "to whom

[h] Heb. i. 2, 3. [i] Is. lvii. 2. [k] Tit. i. 14. [l] 1 Tim. iv. 7.

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God gave an answer from heaven," they said, "as he was praying to him[m]," as give ear to this fable of R. Judah, who must be magnified by them, because he was the compiler of their traditional law. And as for R. Samuel the less, whom I mentioned before, he was the man who composed the famous prayer against heretics for their public devotions; wherein they desire God that he would "destroy all heretics:" whereby they mean Christians, who began in those days to grow apace. And therefore it is no wonder that he is cried up to the skies, and must be honoured with praises from heaven. But the best of it is, these petty stories want vouchers; or those who offer themselves had need to bring some better men to be bound for their honesty. They have no John Baptists to attest any thing, much less such men as the apostles, who, with the power of miracles and prophecy, were ready on all occasions to pawn their lives, that they did not *follow cunningly-devised fables*, when *they made known the power and coming of our Lord Jesus; but were eyewitnesses*, as you have heard, *of his majesty, and heard the voice when they were with him in the holy mount, which said, This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*[n]. Those masters in Israel also are not so cunning in their contrivances, nor such masters of their craft, but they forget the old rule which admonishes a liar "to have a good memory:" for they contradict themselves while they tell us this *Bath-col* was but the fag end of a voice, a kind of echo leaping out of another voice; and yet make it deliver such long sentences. And what likelihood is there that God should grace such men as they, who had turned their religion into vain janglings and idle disputes (witness the quarrel between the school of that Hillel now mentioned and the school of Schammai) with such elogiums from heaven as were fit to be given only to the best of men, yea, to the Son of God himself?

One of these four things is far more probable. Either that their latter writers have strained the words of their forefathers too far, who meant perhaps no more by their hearing a *Bath-col*, but that the thing whereof they write was as evident to them as if they had had a divine testimony for it. For in

[m] August. Tract. 13. in Johan. [tom. iii. part. 2. col. 3984.]
[n] [2 Pet. i. 16, 17.]

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Pirke Avoth I observe R. Joshua says, that *jotzeth bath-col*, "the daughter of a voice goeth forth day by day from Mount Horeb, and proclaims, saying, Woe to men because of their contempt of the law." Which can signify no more but that if men would listen to the law which God gave there, they would hear how dangerous it is to disobey it. Or, secondly, there was something of a conjuration in it. For in *Pirke Elieser* I find[o], that when there was a dispute only about the leap-year, the governor of the school pronounced the name with four letters, and presently they heard a voice, saying, "The Lord spake to Moses and Aaron," &c. As if they could have this voice whensoever they did but pronounce that single word. Or, thirdly, they were men of a strong imagination, which made them fancy they heard a voice from heaven, when it was only a blast of melancholy fumes and vapours whistling in their brain. For this may be a fair account of those who thought, as some among us have done, that they heard such or such a place of Scripture sounding in their ears, as an answer to their prayers or their doubts. Or, lastly, there being many Jews in our Saviour's time and afterward, who knew very well what had been reported of him, but yet continued sworn enemies to his religion; they ventured to report the same of their own doctors, and persuaded the people that they were approved by voices from heaven, and therefore ought to be received by all posterity as men of a divine stamp, who had the highest testimony from Almighty God.

This I am sure of, there is nothing to make it credible that any man among them in those ages was thus honoured by God. Nobody appears that dare say they heard it: nor does any of them pretend that they saw these rabbies shine in the least glimpse of such glory as our Saviour did when he was honoured with that glorious testimony from heaven, which pronounced him the Head of all principality and power. Much less were they, as St. Luke speaks, by many *infallible proofs*[p] (for we rely not upon the voice from heaven by itself alone) declared to be the men of God. And therefore, that which to me seems nearest to the truth in this matter is, that there had been a perfect deep silence since the death of the latter prophets, and no revelation made of God's mind, of any sort what-

[o] Chap. viii. [p. 17.] [p] [Acts i. 3.]

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soever in that nation, till John the Baptist came, who was filled with the Holy Ghost, and sent by God in the spirit and power of Elias to prepare the way of our Lord. Who, when he first appeared, had such an approbation given him by God the Father, in the audience of John, as had not been vouchsafed to any person; and in such a manner (by a voice from heaven) as had not been in use for many ages, but yet was the most ancient way of his communicating his mind to men. Thus God called to Adam in the garden, and thus he spake to Abraham, and Moses, and Samuel; and therefore so he now speaks to him who was the second Adam, the true *seed* promised to Abraham, the prophet like to Moses: testifying both to him and to others by his own voice from heaven (which was the old way of revelation before all others, and a clearer way there cannot be) that he was his only begotten Son.

And here perhaps it may not be amiss to observe, that this voice anciently was very low, like a small whisper in one's ear: whereas the voice to our Saviour was loud and strong, making a great noise in the ears of those that heard it. So Eliphaz tells us, that in a vision which he had, *there was silence, and I heard a voice*[o]. The Hebrew is exactly rendered by Mercer, 'I heard silence and a voice:' that is, 'a still voice,' as the margin of our Bible hath it. And so Elias is said to hear a 'voice of silence,' *a still small voice*[p], as we render it; a speech next to silence, which did but whisper very low, and made no noise at all in his ears. On the contrary, you read in the place last expounded[q], the voice which spake of our Saviour was so loud and audible, that the people, who were at some distance, thought it had been a clap of thunder. It did not silently creep into their ears, but rent the clouds to make its way with a great deal of power and force into them. I cannot say that the other voice was so loud, which the disciples heard on the *holy mount*, but it was so clear and piercing, that when they heard it they were astonished, and fell flat upon their faces[r]. The light wherein he appeared was not more visible than the voice which testified to him was audible; and both were very amazing. Which may very well denote the excellency of our Saviour's person, and the efficacy of his doctrine above all that

[o] Job iv. 16. [p] 1 Kings xix. 12. [q] John xii. 29. [r] Matt. xvii. 6.

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had been before him. He declared God's mind more fully and perfectly, and spake it more plainly and perspicuously. He transcended all others in both these, as much as a full voice is above a little murmur or whisper in the ear; or a speech, distinctly pronounced, is to be preferred before the lisping of imperfect words.

But whatsoever become of this, we may certainly conclude, from the audibleness and clearness of the voice whereby God gave his testimony to Jesus, that they are the more to be believed who affirm they heard this voice from heaven and report it to us: it not being easy for them to be deceived. This voice was like that of an herald who proclaims a prince, and it said, in effect, *I have set my king upon my holy hill of Sion; thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*[s]. Which had a most eminent and full completion at his resurrection and exaltation; but began to be fulfilled when he was transfigured upon this *holy hill*, and had a representation of his future glory made to him: which he did not assume to himself, as the apostle discourses[t], but was *called unto it* by him that said then, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;* and said now, *This is my well beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear him.*

And thus, you see, having made an inquiry into the testimony of one of these witnesses, the first and greatest, we find it so full and clear on his behalf, that we must either disbelieve God, or else believe in Jesus, and receive him for the Son of God. For he received more than once *honour and glory* from God the Father: who was so highly *glorified also by him*, that he hath now completely *glorified him with himself*, and therefore expects that his name should be perpetually glorified and praised by us in some such words as these:

A PRAYER.

Adored be thy love, O Lord of heaven and earth; adored be thy great and wonderful love, which hath thus glorified thy Son Jesus, and given us such abundant satisfaction that in him thou art well pleased. Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest speak from heaven with so much kindness to him? that thou shouldest so often tell us

[s] [Ps. ii. 6, 7.] [t] Heb. v. 4, 5.

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thou hast sent thy dearly beloved Son, in great humility, to visit us? what an amazing love is this, that thou shouldest admit any of us into such a familiarity with thyself as to hear thy voice, and behold the brightness of thy glory! Our heart ought to answer thee again with the voice of joy, thanksgiving, and praise. Thy high praises ought to be in all our mouths. It becomes us to say continually, with the most elevated minds and hearts, Glory be to thee, O Lord; glory be to thee, O Lord: who dwellest on high, and yet humblest thyself to behold the things that are in heaven and in earth. For ever be thy name glorified by us and by all mankind; who hast honoured our nature so highly in the person of thy only begotten Son Christ Jesus: whom, after thou hadst several ways glorified on earth, thou hast now advanced to the throne of thy glory in heaven.

The hearts of all mankind, with all the love they have, is too small a sacrifice to be offered unto thee; whose love is like thyself, far beyond all that we are able to express. O that our love and affection to thee were so likewise! a most grateful resentment of thy kindness to us, greater than can be uttered! O that our minds and wills, to make some poor expressions of their thankfulness, may most humbly bow themselves, and perfectly stoop to thee, who hast thus graciously condescended unto us! That we may, with the most thankful hearts, receive thy testimony concerning thy Son! sincerely reverence him as our Lord and Saviour! and obediently hearken to his voice; believing his revelations, following his instructions; submitting to his precepts, and rejoicing for ever in the comfort of his precious promises.

There is all reason that we should thus study to approve ourselves to thee. And it is our interest also to be careful to *fulfil all righteousness*, as our Saviour did: that we may have the testimony of a good conscience at present, and a joyful hope to be openly commended and praised by thee hereafter; when we shall hear that voice of the King of glory calling to us, and saying, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*[s]. Amen.

[s] [Matt. xxv. 34.]

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CHAP. III.

Concerning the testimony of the Word.

It is time now to proceed to the examination of the next witness, which is the Word; and to weigh the evidence which he gives concerning Jesus: that is, concerning him who was born of the blessed Virgin Mary, and called by that name; who said, he was the *Son of God.* I make no doubt but we shall find his testimony as full and as strong as the former to verify this, when we have, in a few words, (according to my intended brevity,) declared who this Word is, who now comes and desires to be heard as a witness for Jesus.

And we are told by this very apostle, in the first verse of his Gospel, that the Word is a divine being, which had a subsistence in the beginning of all things. For he was then *with God,* the world was made by him, and therefore *he was God.* That is, "God of God the Father; to whom he hath such a relation," to speak in the words of St. Greg. Nazianzen[t], "as a word or inward thought hath to the mind: not only in regard of his generation without any passion, but because of his intimate conjunction with him, and of his power to declare him. For the Father is known by the Son, who is a brief and easy demonstration of the nature of the Father, as every thing that is begotten is σιωπῶν λόγος, 'the silent word' of that which begat it."

Now this Word, whom the ancients call the eternal reason, the wisdom, the power of the Father, St. John there tells us *was made flesh*[u]; and became so related to that man who was born of the blessed Virgin, as to dwell in him, and be made one with him. A mystery, as Gregory Thaumaturgus excellently speaks[x], which "is to be adored, not scrupulously and nicely weighed; to be discoursed of in divine words, not measured by human reasons." And therefore I shall say no more of it, but that from hence it is that afterward the whole person God-man is called the Word, as you read in the very en-

[t] Διὰ τὸ συναφὲς καὶ τὸ ἐξαγγελτικόν. Orat. 36. [ed. Ben. Orat. xxx. § 20. tom. i. p. 554 A.]

[u] John i. 14.

[x] Προσκυνούμενον, οὐ ζυγοστατούμενον, &c. Serm. 3. in Annunc. [p. 26 B.]

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trance of this Epistle of St. John: where the Word is described to be such a person as may be seen, and felt, and handled, as well as heard. And he is very properly called by this name, because it is his office to declare the mind and will of God to men (as we, by our speech, declare ours one to another) which otherways we could not know. *For no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*[y].

In these words we have a plain and full account why our Lord Jesus is called the Word of God. Not merely because he hath revealed to us the counsel and the pleasure of God, for so did the ancient prophets and the holy apostles; but, first, because he was the immediate interpreter of the divine mind and will, as the word which we speak is of ours. For he was in the very *bosom of the Father;* that is, knew his mind, not by the instructions of an angel, not by visions or dreams, nor only by the Holy Ghost, but by a more intimate discovery of God's counsels and purposes to him, as a person that was one with him. We cannot understand less by his being in his Father's bosom: which is a phrase that signifies he had the nearest familiarity with him, and was privy to his most secret counsels. Which he was able also to accomplish and bring to pass, and for that reason (which is the second) may be called the Word of God: because he hath such a power in heaven and earth, that at his word or command all things are presently done according to his will. For Jesus being represented, you may observe, in a vision to St. John, as *the King of kings, and Lord of lords, clothed in a purple,* i. e. a royal, *robe,* is called by the name of the *Word of God*[z], after he had done publishing God's mind and will, and was then only executing some of his decrees by that power which he hath at God's right hand: a power so great, that he can, by his word alone, (as the Scripture speaks in other cases of God Almighty[a],) without any visible means to effect it, compass his ends, and fulfil what he hath spoken either in his threats or promises. And, lastly, the Article before this name, ὁ λόγος, 'the Word,' denotes him to be the person to whom this title so particularly and eminently belongs, that it can be given to none else: be-

[y] John i. 18. [z] Rev. xix. 13. [a] Ps. xxxiii. 6.

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cause he hath most perfectly declared God's mind and will to us, and revealed to us all his secret purposes concerning us in the fullest manner that can be; and hath a power far surmounting all creatures, to do every thing as he hath declared.

And thus, I suppose, we are to take the word in this place, for the *Word made flesh*, that is, for Jesus himself: who manifested his own greatness and glory, as you have begun to discern already, and bare witness concerning himself in a very eminent and glorious manner, that he was the *Son of God*. But you must not expect that I should here produce all the demonstrations which he gave of this truth, from the time of his being *made flesh* and coming to dwell among us. No, we are to consider that the apostle is now speaking of those witnesses which are *in heaven*, and thence give their testimony; and therefore we must not, at present, seek for any evidences which he produced while he was on earth, to justify his high authority, which is comprehended under the name of the *Son of God*; but inquire after those only which he hath given of it since he went to heaven, and ascended to the throne of his glory. From whence this *Word of God* hath been pleased to speak, or in some very remarkable manner to assert this truth, upon no less than three several occasions.

I.

First of all he showed himself to his first martyr, St. Stephen, in a sensible majesty, *standing at the right hand of God*, in the splendour of the divine glory. Read but Acts vii. 55, 56, and there you will find he made himself so plainly appear to be *the Son of God*, and that *with power* (as St. Paul, you have heard, speaks in Rom. i. 4): that is, the King of heaven and earth, next to the most supreme Majesty of God the Father Almighty, that nothing can be said against it, unless any man will be so audacious as to fancy that this holy and glorious martyr was strongly deluded. But there is a clear demonstration against that from the whole story of his life and death: for he was a man of great note and eminency in the church; who held the very first place among the seven deacons that were chosen to attend the daily ministration to the poor[b]. The

[b] Acts vi. 5.

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feeding of whose bodies he did not think the only thing belonging to his charge; but such was his zeal, he likewise broke and dispensed the bread of life to all his neighbours. He justified the Christian faith (of which he was full[c]) against all opposers, with singular wisdom, great fervour, and mighty demonstrations, by the power of the Holy Ghost. He confounded all those whom he disputed withal, though he could not overcome them. He stopped their mouths by the *wisdom and spirit wherewith he spake*, which made them wish they could stop his, though there was no other way, they saw, to silence him but by taking away his life. They suborned therefore false witnesses against him, whom they knew not how to confute. They brought him before their great council to be tried: where all his judges, fixing their eyes upon him, saw he was so far from being at all daunted, that there was a sparkling majesty in his countenance, like that of an angel when he appeared to their forefathers[d]. They could never devise or fancy any thing greater to say of them or of their most eminent doctors than now they beheld in this illustrious person. The face of the patriarch Isaac, they tell us, was so changed when the Holy Spirit rested on him, that a divine light or splendour came from his face. And they would have us believe that Phineas his countenance did burn and flame like a torch by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in him. Nay, Maimonides himself (to omit the other authors in which I find these reports) will have the prophets to be angels. So he interprets, more than once, the first and the fourth verses of the second chapter of the Book of Judges: where by the *angel of the Lord* he understands a prophet whom God sent to them to bring them to repentance; and expressly says[e] that their wise men have told them this was Phineas; "for at that time, when the majesty of God dwelt upon him, he was like to an angel of the Lord." And it is the opinion of some of them, whose names are not worth mentioning, that in the prophetical visions the form of a man vanished, and the appearance of an angel came in the room thereof, till such time as the vision ceased. The light which shone within was so great that it broke

[c] Acts vi. 5, 8, 10.
[d] vi. 15.
[e] More Nevochim, part ii. cap. 42. [p. 311.]

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through their bodies, and externally appeared, if we could believe these doctors, who would fain adorn their wise men with that glory which they really beheld in this man of God, St. Stephen: who was so full of the Holy Ghost, and had such glorious illuminations in his mind, that there was indeed an amazing lustre in his face, and he looked more like an angel than a man. This emboldened him to speak to that grave senate with all the assurance in the world, and to reprove them for resisting the Holy Ghost: which so cut them to the heart, that it enraged them to the highest degree of fury, and they looked upon him as if they would eat him up. But he, still full of the Holy Ghost, and nothing fearing what he saw he must suffer from an exasperated multitude, cast up his eyes above, and fastened them steadfastly upon the heavens, from whence cometh our help: where he bade them all take notice that he *saw the glory of God, and Jesus*[f] shining at his right hand in a far greater glory than they had seen in his face. That was only a glimpse of the majesty of Jesus, whom he preached to them; and now feared not to affirm that he saw, in his royal splendour and greatness, incomparably above all the angels in heaven.

And is it not a great deal more reasonable to believe that he indeed saw Jesus there, than to think that he would obtrude thus boldly a mere imagination upon them, with the certain loss of his own life? If he had not been sure that he beheld him whom they crucified, now most highly glorified, a person of his wisdom and spirit would have been more cautious than to follow him in that bloody path to which this assertion led him; when, if he would have held his tongue, there lay a fairer and smoother way before him. But so visible was the royal majesty of our Saviour, that he could not but proclaim it aloud, and *speak*, as St. Peter said, *the things which he had seen*[g]; though he knew they would call it blasphemy, and punish him for it with present death. He was willing to suffer that for the honour of his Master, and to testify his love to him, who told him his faith was no fancy, as he might see by the glory wherein he appeared: which abundantly satisfied him that he was the Son of the Highest; able to reward all

[f] Acts vii. 54, 55. [g] [Acts iv. 20.]

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his faithful servants with immortal glory. It is true, we read of never a word that our Lord spake to this saint; but the splendour of his appearance in such glory and majesty at God's right hand was as significant as any words could be; and bid him be assured of the truth of what St. John is here proving, that indeed he is the Christ, the anointed of God; anointed with the oil of gladness above all his fellows; made the Lord of all things; inferior to none but only him who hath put all things in subjection under his feet.

If any one ask me how he could *see the glory of God*, and how he knew this to be *Jesus* who appeared at *God's right hand?* I answer to the first inquiry, that he saw God's glory in the same sense that others are said to have seen God: who beheld some very bright appearance, an extraordinary light shining before their eyes, which excelled all that ever they had seen or could imagine, and was the token of the divine presence. Thus *Moses was afraid to look upon God*[g], and the elders of Israel are said to *see the God of Israel*[h], which places, Maimonides thinks, are to be understood of the vision of God with the eyes of the mind. But the text is plainly against him, which tells us there was a visible appearance of some unusual, astonishing brightness. And therefore he confesses that if any man do conceive those words are to be interpreted of some created light (as he speaks[i]), that is, the visible apparition of a divine Majesty, or of an angel, there is no danger in such an apprehension. And indeed no man can seriously read the Books of Moses, but he will see plainly they speak of a sensible glory, which was exceeding dazzling, and sometimes too great for the weak eyes of men to behold. I have described it before, when I told you it was nothing else but a flaming light, which shone from that amazing devouring fire which appeared in the cloud to the children of Israel. Thus Abarbanel expounds that place I mentioned before, *in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord*[k]: which is not to be understood of the providing them bread or flesh in an extraordinary manner, but of "the fire which appeared to all the people, to reprove and punish them for their murmur-

[g] Exod. iii. 6. [h] xxiv. 10. [i] More Nevoch. part. 1. cap. 5. [p. 10.] and many other places. [k] Exod. xvi. 7.

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ings." And so Lyra says, it was "an unusual refulgent brightness or lightning, representing the divine power ready to chastise them for their mutiny against his servants." And it is very common in the New Testament to call such a great splendour by the name of glory: as the shining of Moses his face is called by St. Paul *the glory of his countenance*[l]. And in the same style he speaks of the light of the heavenly bodies, when he says, *There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory*[m], that is, in the brightness and splendour of its light.

Such a glory it was that now St. Stephen beheld, but far more splendid, more pure and illustrious than the light of the sun, or any other that has been mentioned; which was a representation of the presence of the divine Majesty, who used in this manner to make men sensible of his transcendent invisible glory. And there, in the divine presence, he saw our Lord, in the most high and honourable place, next to God the Father himself. For that is the meaning of his appearing at *the right hand of God*, or of that great *glory* he saw in the heavens: the right hand being the principal place belonging to the heir of the crown when he appears together with the King his Father. And therefore the divine writer of the Hebrews says there never was any angel seen there. They only *stand* or minister *before God* or before his throne; *but to which of them did he say at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool*[n]? This is the prerogative of Christ alone, the great King, the Heir of all things; whose glory the Psalmist describes in that place[o], from whence these words are cited; that is, prophecies of his kingly power in the heavens, as St. Paul clearly expounds this phrase of *sitting at God's right hand. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet*[p]. He is a King, and he reigns, and he hath a *throne*[q]; but when he is compared with God the Father Almighty, the fountain of all power and authority, and when he appears together with him, to show that he reigns under him and for him, he is represented as sitting at the *right hand*

[l] 2 Cor. iii. 7. [m] 1 Cor. xv. 41. [n] Heb. i. 13. [o] Ps. cx. 1. [p] 1 Cor. xv. 25. [q] Heb. i. 8.

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of God, or the right hand of the *throne of God*. For so his kingly power is expressed in other places; *He is set down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*[r]: that is, he reigns together with God the Father in the celestial glory. For *the throne of God* signifying, in the Scripture phrase, (as the forenamed Maimonides observes,) that place where God's majesty manifests itself in a visible splendour and glory; the sitting of our Saviour at the right hand of the throne, or that glory, denotes nothing else but his being seated in the highest honour that can be given any one in the heavenly places: next in greatness, power, and majesty to God himself, under whom he is King of angels, and men, and all creatures. There was nothing of which this holy martyr was more assured; to whom this heavenly King appeared, not in his usual posture of *sitting* at God's right hand, as one possessed of his royal power, but standing there, as if he was ministering in the heavenly sanctuary in the quality of a royal high priest (for that was the posture of those that ministered in the temple[s]) for the comfort of all Christian people, and of himself especially; or rather as ready to come to take vengeance of those implacable enemies who had killed him, and now persecuted his servants; which was a notable instance of his royal power at God's right hand. For there the Psalmist says he must reign till he hath subdued all those that oppose his authority, and trodden them under his feet.

And as for the second inquiry, how he could know this to be Jesus, whom we saw in this heavenly majesty? it is easily resolved, that he appeared to him with such a countenance as he had here upon earth; only more shining and bright, as being now in the glory of the Father. And so he tells the Jews, I see *the Son of man* standing at the right hand of God. That very person, he means, who used to call himself *the Son of man*, whom you crucified and dishonourably treated, I now see so exalted, that I had rather die as he did, than not confess him to be *the Son of God*, as he said he was when he died.

This is the first testimony which was given to this truth by the Word: who bore witness in a most illustrious manner to himself, when he appeared thus (to a person of the greatest

[r] Heb. viii. 1; xii. 2. [s] Ps. cxxxiv. 1.

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credit) in the *divine glory*, and in the *highest place* of celestial dignity, (as the *King of heaven*, that is); and *risen up from his throne;* as if he was coming to be *avenged* of his adversaries, to *succour* all his servants, and to *welcome* this martyr into glory with himself. So St. Stephen verily thought, for he resigns up his soul to Jesus with the same confidence, and almost in the same words, that Jesus gave up his to God the Father. The last words of our Saviour were, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* [t]. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit* [u]. He died with these and the following devout words in his mouth, crying again with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* In which he expressed as much *charity* to men as in the other he did *faith* in Christ. And openly declared himself a person of such piety and goodness, such admirable candour and sweetness of spirit, so utterly void of all rancour and gall, when he had the highest provocations from his bitter enemies; that, as we may be sure he could not be guilty of devising a lie to the deceiving of others, so we may reasonably believe that God Almighty would not let such an excellent man be deceived, to the ruin of himself and casting away so precious a life.

II.

But that jealousy and suspicion might have no pretence left, nor any man justly call in question the truth of this apparition, our Saviour was pleased a second time both to show himself, and also to speak very audibly unto another person of great integrity and authority; and that was St. Paul. Whose testimony concerning this is the more considerable, because he was a person of considerable note in the nation of the Jews, both for his descent and for his education, and for his zeal in their religion. He was an Hebrew both by his father's side and his mother's; a scholar of Gamaliel's, under whom he made an exceeding great proficiency; and was addicted to the most strict sect of religion then among them; whereby he became full of flaming zeal for the law, of which he was a rigid observer, even according to the expositions they had made of it by the traditions of their elders [x]. These he held so sacred, that the name of

[t] Luke xxiii. 46. [u] Acts vii. 59. [x] Phil. iii. 5; Gal. i. 14; Acts xxvi. 5.

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Jesus was odious to him, because he little regarded them. And he was transported with so bloody a rage against his disciples, that his intention was to send as many of them as he could meet withal after St. Stephen, *to whose death he was consenting* [y]; that is, he approved the fact of those seditious zealots who were the authors of it; or, as the words may well be rendered out of the Syriac translation, he was as well pleased with the killing of him as any of the company. The lenity of his Master was no example for him to follow. He learnt no meekness in the school of Gamaliel, but suffered himself to be hurried away with the furious spirit of the multitude, whom he accompanied in that tumult. For he undertook to secure the garments of those who stript themselves to throw the first stone at that blessed martyr of Christ Jesus. Nor did his fury rest here, but he gave his voice against other saints when the sentence of death passed on them [z]. And not content to make havock of the poor church at Jerusalem, he enlarged his cruel projects, and stretches his wrath as far as Damascus; thither he goes armed with authority from the senate [a], whose commissioner he was now, as he had been for some time: which shows he was a person of no small condition in that nation. For he tells us himself, that what he did at Jerusalem was *by authority from the chief priests* [b]; who gave him *letters* also to those at Damascus, that they should assist him in the apprehending all the Christians that were there [c]. He brought the decree of the senate along with him, which had been made against them; and lest any should question whether he was deputed to see that order put in execution, he was ready to satisfy them of that by showing his commission [d]. In short, he breathed forth nothing but fire and sword, as we speak, against the worshippers of the Lord Jesus, being *exceeding mad against them;* according to the account St. Luke gives of him [e], and which he gives of himself [f].

Now who would expect that such a man as this should himself become a disciple of Jesus, much less a preacher of his religion? A man so noted for his violence the other way, and whose name was so terrible to Christian people, that Ananias

[y] Acts viii. 1; xxii. 20.
[z] Acts xxvi. 10.
[a] xxii. 5.
[b] xxvi. 10.
[c] ix. 2; xxii. 5.
[d] xxvi. 12.
[e] Acts viii. 3; ix. 1.
[f] xxii. 4; xxvi. 11.

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was afraid to go and deliver a message to him from our Lord, after he was told something of his conversion? Was there any hopes that he should ever confess and publish the very same thing for which St. Stephen was stoned? And yet so powerful were the prayers of that holy martyr (which adds much to the force of his testimony) that our Lord answered them ere long, by pardoning and converting this enraged zealot, to whom he was graciously pleased to appear, as he had done to that saint, more than once, as we find recorded in the sacred story from his own mouth.

The first time, and the most remarkable, was, when he was upon the road to Damascus. Then our Lord met him, not far from that city (when he had no such thing in his thoughts, but was possessed with quite contrary designs), and made him fall down and worship him, whose name he so hated, that he would have forced all Christians to blaspheme him. Read the Acts, ix. 3, &c., and there you will find him, who little regarded what St. Stephen said, and perhaps took him for a frantic fellow when he told them he saw Jesus glorified, surrounded himself with such a glorious light from heaven, as left him no power to resist this truth which he had so bitterly persecuted. For in that wonderful brightness there was a person appeared to him with such a dazzling lustre, that after he had beheld it, he lost his eyes, *and could not see by reason of the glory of that light*[g]; which was the cause, I believe, that he asked with no small astonishment, *Who art thou, Lord?* The angels appeared sometimes in great glory, but never with such a splendour as to hurt the sight, much less to take it away; and therefore he now concluded that this person was of an higher condition, much greater than the angelical ministers, whose brightness was never known to be so amazing. And to give satisfaction to his doubt, our Lord, the Word of God, told him in plain terms, with an audible voice, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:* and wished him not to proceed any further in this course, which he might easily see would prove destructive to him. For to contend with him still who was so glorious, what would it be but to wound and ruin himself; and by seeking to ease himself of one trouble to run upon a greater; just

[g] xxii. 11.

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as a beast does that kicks against the pricks, which are to quicken it and put it forward? This voice he alone heard, who was to be instructed by it. The company that was with him heard only a confused sound[h], and his voice perhaps when he asked that question; but as they saw nobody, so they *did not hear the voice of him that spake to him*[i]. But the light they all saw, and were so afraid that there they stopped their journey, and could not, for the present, stir a foot from that place. For that is the meaning of *they stood speechless*[k]. They did not stand on their feet, for they all fell to the ground (as you read[l]), but they remained fixed in that spot, and could neither speak a word nor go on a step further. As for Saul himself, he *trembled and was astonished;* and began to yield himself presently as a captive to this heavenly King, saying, *Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?* To this our Lord made him again a distinct answer (which shows this was no sudden fancy, but that they continued for some time in a conference together) and bade him get up, and go into the city, and there he should be directed by him what to do. Accordingly our Lord appeared in a vision to Ananias, who had the charge, it is likely, of the church at Damascus, and ordered him to go in his name, and to lay his hands upon him for the restoring of his sight[m]; after which he told him, that he must now go and tell all men *what he had seen and what he had heard*[n]; that is, declare to all the world that Jesus was the King of glory. And, which is still more wonderful, Saul himself, as he lay there praying to the Lord for mercy, had the like vision[o], wherein he saw a man of this name coming in to do him this kindness. Who no sooner had executed his commission and put his hands upon him, but immediately the power of our Lord appeared, after he himself in person was gone. His eyes were presently opened, though they were sealed up so fast as if a crust had grown over them.

And wonderful was the illumination of his understanding, together with the restoring of his sight. The light which had put out his eyes made him clearly see, though he was not told so in express words, that *Jesus was the Son of God.* This

[h] Acts ix. 7. [i] xxii. 9. [k] ix. 7. [l] xxvi. 14. [m] ix. 17. [n] xxii. 15. [o] ix. 12.

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heavenly Word, you may observe, doth not in all this story call himself by that name. But he declaring himself to be Jesus, and Saul seeing this Jesus in so bright a glory that it exceeded the light of the sun at midday, (as he confesses to Agrippa[p],) it did more than tell him that he was, as St. Stephen had preached, *the Son of God, the King of glory.* For he appeared to him in his glory, and then told him that he whom he beheld thus exceeding glorious was that very Jesus whom he was pursuing as a blasphemer for affirming himself to be that which he now saw him with his own eyes to be.

What could be more convincing than this? especially when he felt himself filled with the Holy Ghost[q], merely by the laying on of the hands of one of Jesus his disciples? He durst not distrust, much less resist, so clear and evident a demonstration. He saw there was nothing truer than that Jesus was the *Son of God.* All his learning could not furnish him with an argument to confute or weaken this single proof which our Saviour gave him of his divinity. But straightway, upon this testimony from the Word of God himself, without requiring any further demonstration, *He preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God*[r]. Ananias did not catechise him in this doctrine, nor sent him to the apostles to be instructed; but he was made an apostle as well as they, *by Jesus Christ* himself[s], who acquainted him immediately with his will, for he *was not taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*[t], whom he preached without asking counsel of anybody, as soon as God was pleased *to reveal his Son in him*[u]. I believe you will easily grant that he was as hard as any man living to be persuaded to receive this revelation, which would force him not only to contradict all that he had formerly maintained, but to condemn himself as the vilest wretch in the world. To become a disciple to this faith, and to assert it likewise so earnestly as he did; what was it but to condemn, together with himself, all his masters, the grave judges of the nation, from whom he had received a commission to destroy it? It required great courage as well as honesty to confess a truth which he knew, by himself, would be so furiously opposed.

[p] Acts xxvi. 13. [q] ix. 17. [r] ix. 20. [s] Gal. i. 1. [t] Ver. 12. [u] Ver. 16.

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He had been such a fiery persecutor of all those who believed it, that he had taught his countrymen how to deal with him if he should now become a proselyte to it. He was a man also of very great parts and learning, and therefore was not like to be moved by a trivial argument: and a person likewise of as great integrity, who did not bear a malice against Christians, but was only zealous for the law; and therefore would not embrace a new religion, unless he had learnt better reasons for it than those which supported him in the old. Much less would he have suffered himself hastily to be carried out of his way, unless he had met with some irresistible arguments which were able instantly to turn him about, and incline him to the profession of that truth which he was then persecuting with an outrageous violence.

And yet so it was that this man, so resolved in another course, so certainly undone if he forsook it, of such understanding and uprightness, was in a trice astonished, and reduced to such a condition that he could neither eat nor drink; and in three days' space so wrought upon, that straightway, as you have heard, without any further deliberation, or taking more time to study the point, he not only believed, but undertook to prove, that this person whom he had so zealously opposed, was indeed the *Son of God*. Must it not be some mighty argument that could overcome all those reasons and interests too which had engaged him in the contrary belief? Was it not a very clear demonstration which could open such a man's eyes in a moment, and break through such strong opposition as lay before his mind to bar its entrance? And yet it was nothing else but this testimony which the Word bare to himself that effected this wonderful change: nothing but Jesus appearing in glory, giving him a terrible rebuke, and striking him blind, which wrought such a strange cure upon him, that, as he himself speaks, he became *a preacher of that faith which once he destroyed*[x]. And therefore this witness cannot but be very powerful to convince every body else, which prevailed over a person so prejudiced and preengaged in an opposite persuasion as Saul was: who took this testimony, which our Lord had given to himself, to be so strong and un-

[x] Gal. i. 23.

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answerable, that presently after this, when he had further considered of the business, and was increased in strength, he even *confounded the Jews that were at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ*[y]. So mightily did he convince them, that they had no answer wherewith to encounter his arguments but only the sword; and therefore consulted[z] to kill him, and take him out of the way; who as long as he lived they saw would be the greatest witness unto Jesus. But all these dangers he undervalued, he ran innumerable hazards, made strange adventures, and endured matchless troubles, that he might give testimony to Jesus, who had shown himself to him to be the Lord of all. Nay, though he was told at his first setting out *how great things he must suffer for his name's sake*[a], he was nothing at all dismayed, nor in the least discouraged: having seen the bright majesty of Jesus so clearly, that flames themselves could not make him deny it, no, nor cease to preach it.

So great was the force of this glorious appearance of our Lord to him, whereby he testified his own power and greatness, that when St. Paul was actually fallen into the hands of his bloody enemies, and made a prisoner, in order to his execution, he had nothing of greater note to allege for himself, by which to justify his preaching Jesus to be the Son of God, than this: that he *had seen that Just One, and heard the voice of his mouth;* for no other end but this, *That he should be his witness unto all men, of what he had seen and heard*[b]. And as this was the best plea he had when he was to make his defence in that popular tumult, so it was the thing that convinced the apostles themselves that he was become a disciple: for they doubted of it at first, when he came to Jerusalem, and were afraid to associate themselves with him, till Barnabas told them *how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus*[c]. When he came also to answer for himself before Agrippa, a prince of great understanding, and well versed in the Jewish religion, still he stands upon this, that he who thought himself bound in conscience to do many things contrary to the name of *Jesus of Nazareth*, whose servants he procured to be imprisoned, banished and put to death, was

[y] Acts ix. 22. [z] Ver. 23. [a] ix. 16. [b] xxii. 15, 16. [c] ix. 27.

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met by this very Jesus in the way to Damascus (when he was going with commission to do the same there that he had done at Jerusalem); saw his exceeding great and incomparable glory; was severely rebuked by him for his rage against his disciples, and then received a commission from him to act in his name, and to preach against the former; all which was so evident, that he durst not be disobedient to the heavenly vision, but had ever since called upon both Jews and Gentiles to repent and believe in Jesus, though he had been crucified: for it was the mind of all the prophets and Moses that their *Christ should suffer, and then be the first that should rise from the dead, and show light to the people and to the Gentiles.* This is the substance of his apology in Acts xxvi., from which place we may learn two things which are very considerable. First, that when our Lord appeared to St. Paul, he had a great deal of discourse with him, and did not say so little as only those words, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*, &c., but added those words which follow: *Rise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those in the which I will appear unto thee: delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*[d]. The divine writers are wont to be very brief in their relations, and to mention only the principal things which were said and done, leaving out the rest, which perhaps they set down upon some other occasion. And secondly, in these words it is observable, that he tells him he must be a witness not only of *the things which he had seen* (now in the way to Damascus), but of those *in which he intended to appear unto him.* Which clearly intimates that there were other apparitions of the Lord Jesus unto him besides this. Some of them we find recorded in this history of the Acts, and other parts of the holy book.

And a second sight which he had of our Lord was at Jerusa-

[d] Ver. 16–18.

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lem, as he was praying in the temple: when he fell into an ecstasy or rapture, as he relates himself presently after the mention of the former, and *saw him*, bidding him make haste away from that city, where he was not like to do any good, *for they would not receive his testimony concerning him*[e]. This was one of the times, as some great men have thought, when he was carried up to heaven[f].

And again our Lord appeared to him the night after he had been questioned by the council, bidding him be of good cheer, for he should bear witness of him at Rome, as he had done at Jerusalem[g]. And, to omit that apparition to him in a night vision[h], and the revelations which it is like were made to him in Arabia presently after his conversion, he was caught up again into Paradise, and there had ὀπτασίας Κυρίου, *visions* as well as *revelations of the Lord*[i]. When this was it is uncertain. But there are persons of great note who imagine, that when the church of Antioch laid hands on him[j], not to ordain him an apostle, for so he was made by Jesus Christ himself, but to send him out to exercise his apostleship towards the Gentiles, to which he had particularly appointed him; then our Lord vouchsafed to lift him up into heaven, and to give him new revelations. For there could be no time more fit for it than this, when he was to engage in a dangerous war against the whole idolatrous world. Then he was armed with an extraordinary resolution by conversation with angels in the other world: where he heard things unutterable, and was confirmed, no doubt, in the belief of the glory of the Lord Jesus; by whose power he was thus transported, and whom, it is most likely, he then again saw, shining as the sun among those stars of light, in that orb to which he was carried. But this he speaks of so sparingly himself, that I ought to pass it over as fast as he does.

The first is the chiefest and greatest evidence of all: which he most depended on, and whereby he justified himself against all accusers. This was his warrant; to this he appeals upon all occasions, that *he saw Jesus in the way to Damascus.* And he had great reason to stick to it, for he knew that no-

[e] Acts xxii. 17. [f] 2 Cor. xii. 2. [g] Acts xxiii. 11. [h] xviii. 9. [i] 2 Cor. xii. 1. [j] Acts xiii. 3.

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body could shame him, by so much as pretending that he lied, and that there was no such thing as this apparition of Jesus to him. He had his companions in his journey to be witnesses of the miraculous glory which, on a sudden, surprised them as well as him[k]. They heard then the voice of some body discoursing with him, though they did not distinctly hear the words. It became presently notorious every where; *for this thing*, as he tells Agrippa, *was not done in a corner*[l], but openly, and at noonday, to the astonishment of divers persons who attended him. And it left a sensible effect upon his body and upon his mind. He could neither see, nor eat, nor drink for three days: in which space he saw a vision of a man named Ananias coming to him and bidding him receive his sight. All which proved true; and together with his sight he received a new spirit, whereby he confounded the Jews at Damascus: for they could not deny all this, and yet were loath to believe in Jesus. They were amazed to hear him preached by a man who they knew was come thither with a quite contrary intent[m]. They could not but ask, What is the matter? whence comes this marvellous change? *Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem? And is not that the business for which he came hither, to bring them bound unto the chief priests?* What ails him now, that he thus justifies them and condemns himself? And there is no doubt but to answer such questions he took the opportunity to tell them *what he had seen and what he had heard;* for so Ananias charged him[n]. He did not keep this as a secret: it was not carried in privacy, but presently divulged, that all might inquire, if they pleased, into the circumstances of the fact: which was so strange, that as it amazed and confounded them at Damascus; so king Agrippa knew not what to say to it, but was *almost persuaded to be a Christian*[o].

No man of sense could think that a person of his education and learning would venture the loss of his ease, of his reputation, of all the preferment he had, and of all that he might justly hope for from the Sanhedrim, without the least expectation of any gain, unless of that only which Jesus could give him; if he had not been fully assured it was no delusion when

[k] Acts xxvi. 15. [l] Ver. 26. [m] ix. 21. [n] xxii. 15. [o] xxvi. 28.

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he presented himself to him as the Lord of glory. Much less could any man imagine that a person of his virtue and unblamable life under the law, and of such strange piety and perfect contempt of all worldly things after his receiving Christianity, would feign and devise such a story, by which, if it were false, he could get nothing in the other world, and if it were true, he could get nothing in this: nothing but misery, trouble, infamy, and reproach, which attended him every where, and never left him till it had brought him to a shameful death. If you will but consider what he quitted for Christ's sake, after he had thus appeared to him, and how the world treated him when he became a preacher of this gospel (as you find it described by himself in several Epistles, particularly Philipp. iii. 8, 1 Cor. iv. 9—11, &c., 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, &c., xi. 23, 24, &c.) you will soon be satisfied that he was more in his wits than either to invent this story, or publish it without strong assurance of its truth. He was as sure that he saw the Lord Jesus in his glory, and heard the voice of his mouth, as every body else that knew him was sure he had been a blasphemer of him and a persecutor of his servants. And therefore, whatsoever it cost him, he would be obedient to that heavenly vision; and *having a ministry* from him (as he speaks in 2 Cor. iv. 1—3,) *according as he had received mercy*, (so he accounted it a very great favour to become one of his ministers,) *he did not faint*, nor discharge his office sluggishly. Nor did he think of making up his losses by this new profession of preaching the gospel, but abhorred such a dishonest thought, and utterly renounced all such base and shameful arts, though never so secretly managed, and covered over with never such specious pretences. He did not *walk in craftiness*, nor appear other than he really was: much less would he, to please any men, *handle the word of God deceitfully*, either by concealing any thing that was true, or by mixing any false stories of his own inventing. No, by *plain truth he commended himself to every man's conscience, as in the presence of that God* who is the avenger of all fraud and imposture. And therefore, he justly concludes, that if any man did not receive these things, nor think them evident enough, it was because he deserved to perish for the love he bore to some naughty affection or other, which would not let him submit to

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Jesus. For it was him the apostles preached, not themselves[o]; they did not do their own business, but his only, whom they proclaimed to be the Lord, and themselves no more but his servants; nay, the servants of all Christian people for his sake.

But I must no longer follow the story of this great man, who became *so strong in the Lord and in the power of his might*[p], after he had from heaven appeared and spoken to him, that, as nothing could daunt him, so nothing could hinder the success of his labours. He became the most eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, and prevailed so mightily against all the opposition which the devil or men raised to frustrate his endeavours, that he gives thanks to God, in the second chapter of that Epistle[q], *who always caused him to triumph in Christ, and made manifest the odour of his knowledge by him in every place.* All his travels and long journeys proved in the issue as if they had been but the carrying of him about in a triumphal chariot, to make him a glorious spectacle in all those places (as the Syriac translates it) where, in spite of all that the most powerful cruelty and rage could do, he was still victorious, and brought divers souls into a cheerful subjection to his Master Christ Jesus.

III.

Who was pleased last of all, but more frequently than to any other, to show himself, after he went to heaven, to this very apostle whose words I am expounding, his beloved disciple St. John. By whom he comforts and encourages all other Christians to continue steadfast in their religion, and to take their share with him *in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ:* who many ways declared to him that he was the *Son of God*, the King of glory, able to reward his patient servants; and moreover sent letters by him to several churches of the saints, testifying the very same things which he made him see and hear in several visions. They are recorded in that book which tells us, in the very first words of it, that it is the *revelation of Jesus Christ*, which he sent and signified by the ministry of his angel to his servant John:

[o] 2 Cor. iv. 5. [p] [Ephes. vi. 10.] [q] 2 Cor. ii. 14.

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who *had* already *borne record* (so the word ἐμαρτύρησε is to be rendered) *of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus, and of all things that he saw*[r]; had declared, that is, in his Gospel, Jesus to be the Word of God; and made known that which he testified to be God's will concerning men; together with all the evidences, by miracles and other ways, which he had seen of the truth of that which Jesus testified. There could not be a fitter person than he, who perhaps also was the only apostle now remaining in the world, to hold communication with this Word of God, and receive new revelations from Jesus: he being at this time likewise banished and confined to *the isle which is called Patmos*[s], for the cause now named, that is, *for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

In this lonesome place, separated from the rest of the earth, our Lord opened heaven to him, and showed him the glory which he had there. For he fell into a rapture on the *Lord's day*[t], and heard one speak behind him with a voice as loud as a trumpet, saying, *I am before and after all things*, that is, God blessed for ever; *write what thou seest in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia*[u], whose names are there expressed. Whereupon he turned about to see whence this voice came, and then he beheld in the midst of *seven golden candlesticks*, representing those churches, a very glorious person, appearing in the most royal majesty and power. He did not ask him, as St. Paul did, who he was; for he had been long acquainted heretofore with that countenance, and knew him perfectly well to be our blessed Saviour. Who, by his very habit wherein he appeared, declared himself to be, as he had said, the Lord of all; who had no superior, nor any second, in that kingdom which God the Father had given him, but disposed all things according to the sole pleasure of his will. For he beheld him *clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle*[x], &c. He saw, that is, (as Irenæus truly expresses it,) *sacerdotalem et gloriosum regni ejus adventum*[y], 'him appear in his priestly and glorious kingdom.' For a long robe and a golden girdle belonged both to kings and to the high priest in the Jewish nation. And all

[r] Rev. i. 2. [s] Ver. 9. [t] Ver. 10. [u] Ver. 11. [x] Ver. 13—16.
[y] L. iv. c. 37. [al. 20. p. 256.]

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the rest of the description, it were easy to show, is a plain representation of a person shining in the glory of God the Father; and invested with such an irresistible power in the heavens, as might justly make all his friends rejoice who acknowledged him to be the *Son of God* most high, and all his enemies quake and tremble who opposed his sovereign authority. In short, so glorious was the sight, that St. John himself was not able to bear it, but when he saw him, *fell at his feet as dead*[z]; till the Word (as Irenæus speaks in the same place), on whose breast he had reposed himself at his last supper, revived and comforted him with these gracious words: *Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.* As much as to say, Thou wast not deceived when thou thoughtest thou sawest *the Son of man* appear to thee. It is I indeed; therefore be not so afraid, though now thou beholdest me in such heavenly majesty and divine glory; for thou oughtest rather to rejoice to think that I am the eternal God. I, whom thou knewest when I lived upon earth, and whom thou sawest shamefully put to death, am now alive, as thou seest also, never to die any more; and am intrusted with a power to rescue you from death, and raise you out of your graves.

It would be too long, if I should tell you all that he says in his letters to those churches, to assert his title to the name of the *Son of God*, which he expressly takes to himself in one of them[a], and to declare his royal power which he exercises in all the world, especially in his church, the house of the living God; where he hath such an absolute authority (expressed by having *the keys of the house of David*[b], &c.), that none can contradict him, either by preserving any man in the divine favour, if he reject him; or by excluding any man from it, if he receive him. It may suffice to observe these two things: first, that there is not one of those letters but it begins with some such description of our Saviour's sovereign majesty as this now mentioned. For the character he had given of himself in the first chapter is again repeated by parts, in the following messages to the churches. Where he sometimes calls himself, *he that walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*[c], that is,

[z] Ver. 17. [a] Rev. ii. 18. [b] iii. 7. [c] ii. 1.

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inspects and governs them: sometimes the *first and the last, which was dead and is alive*[d]; that is, the Lord God, who can raise him from the dead who parts with his life for me. And, to name no more, he calls himself, *he that hath the sharp sword with two edges*[e], to cut in pieces either them or their enemies, according as they deserved of him. And indeed it being the office of a king (which is the second thing to be observed) or a supreme governor to punish offenders, and to reward virtuous persons; he constantly assumes both these powers to himself, in every one of these seven letters; telling them what evil should befall them from his hand if they did not amend, and what blessings he would bestow upon them if they did overcome. Which is a plain declaration of his regal power and authority, which he now hath at the right hand of the throne of God.

There St. John saw him in a second vision, as Irenæus calls it[f], where he appears in such power with God, that none hath the like. For there was a Majesty represented to the apostle, sitting on a throne, with a book in *his right hand*[g], which none could open, or read, or so much as look into. And then, behold, this Lamb of God, who had been slain, comes and appears in *the midst of the throne;* being the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, as one of the elders calls him[h], that royal person whom God promised to send to rule over them. He takes the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne[i], which signifies that he is next to God the Father of all, at whose right hand he stood, in power and glory. As appears also by his being seated in his throne, (for the thrones of the eastern kings, to which these expressions allude, were wide, like one of our couches, in which more than one may sit,) and by his having the principal angels, *the seven spirits of God*, at his command, to employ where he pleased: who, together with the rest of the heavenly host, and with the Christian church, make their acclamations to him[k], as worthy of the most supreme power and dignity, which they express in as many names of praise as there are principal spirits of God; when they say, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive* (1) *power, and* (2) *riches, and* (3) *wisdom, and* (4) *strength, and* (5) *ho-*

[d] Ver. 8. [e] Ver. 12. [f] Rev. v. 6. [g] Ver. 1. [h] Ver. 5.
[i] Ver. 7. [k] Ver. 11, 12.

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nour, and (6) *glory, and* (7) *blessing.* And then immediately he hears every creature joining him in their doxology, together with God the Father, saying, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*[l].

But the more fully to represent his divine power, you may observe that he appears in another vision to him, in the very same state and majesty wherein God was wont to make himself present in the times of old. Then you read, that the Lord *made the clouds his chariot, and walked upon the wings of the wind*[m]; that is, came to them by the ministry of angels, who appeared in bright and shining clouds, to do his will with great expedition every where. For so it is expounded in the Psalm, where, instead of *clouds*, it is said, *He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind*[n]; that is, there was a token of his presence by the majestic appearance of angels, who were ready to be employed by him, and immediately to execute his commands. For to *ride* upon any thing, as Maimonides observes[o], is, in the holy language, to rule, to govern, to have an absolute power over it, and dispose of it as one pleases. And therefore *to ride upon a cherub*, or *to make the clouds his chariot*, (which are the very same, because the angels appeared in glorious clouds,) is to send those heavenly ministers whither he thinks good, to perform his pleasure. Whence it is, I suppose, that the Psalmist says elsewhere, *His strength is in the clouds*[p], because he is powerfully present by them in all places. For, as Andreas Cæsariensis hath truly observed, in his Commentaries upon the Revelation, a *cloud*, in the sacred writings, is ever "a minister about divine businesses, and perpetually employed in them[q];" because they are above us, and are very swift, as the angels are in their motions, and are both dark and bright; a fit emblem of the glory of the divine Majesty which is inscrutable by us.

Now just in such a glorious majesty and mighty power did St. John behold our blessed Saviour; making *the clouds*, that is, the angels, *his chariot*, in which he sat as a Lord to whom

[l] Ver. 13. [m] Ps. civ. 3. [p] Ps. lxviii. 34.
[n] Ps. xviii. 10. [q] Ἀεὶ τῶν θείων πραγμάτων ὑπουργός, &c. [ad calc. Œcum. p. 773.]
[o] More Nevoch. part. 1. cap. 70. [p. 128.]

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they were to do service. So he tells us in Rev. xiv. 14, *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.* Where by *cloud*, the forementioned writer understands ἀγγελικήν τινα δύναμιν[r], 'some angelical power' (of which this *white*, that is, bright *cloud*, was a representation) ministering to our Saviour. For St. John saw him upon this cloud; and *sitting* there, as if it were the throne or royal chariot of this prince: who sat there with a *crown on his head*, denoting his royal authority; and that of *gold*, to show, by what is most precious among us, τὸ ἔνδοξον, the splendour and greatness of his majesty; and with *a sickle in his hand*, to signify that he hath such a power as to be able to cut down kingdoms and states with as much ease as we mow a field of corn. All these *three* last expressions set forth the highest dignity and most royal power; and therefore so doth his *sitting upon a cloud*, or being carried by angels, as kings were anciently and still are in the Eastern countries, by their servants. Which kind of speech, and other such like phrases in the holy language, (as *riding upon the wings* of angels, denoted by the *clouds* and *wind*,) signify the exercise of his kingly power by their ministry: who are ready to fly any whither to convey his orders, and execute them throughout the world. Where he being present by them, as a king is by his several ministers in every part of his dominions, he is said to *sit upon them*, as if, whithersoever they go, they carried him. Thus the ancient books speak of God the Creator and Governor of all; and thus our Saviour teaches St. John to speak of him: which is a sign that he is the Son of God, *who sends forth the angels to minister for them especially who shall be heirs of salvation*[s].

And therefore in another vision, which is all I need mention[t], he saw him again coming out of heaven, with the royal ensigns of his victorious power over those who had opposed his authority. For, *behold a white horse*, which was proper for a conqueror, and one sitting upon him, whose name was called the WORD *of God:* who was *clothed*, he tells us, *with a vesture dipped in blood;* that is, with a purple garment, such as kings

[r] [p. 773 B.] [s] [Heb. i. 14.] [t] Rev. xix. 11, 12, &c.

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use to wear: and *his eyes* sparkled, or rather *flamed like fire,* to denote how terrible he was to his enemies; and *there were on his head many crowns,* because he had already conquered several kingdoms and provinces, and was now going to subdue more: being attended with *all the armies in heaven,* who waited upon him to minister to him in this war, till, as he was of right, he was actually acknowledged, by humble subjection to him, to be KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And what greater argument can there be of the power of our Lord and of the truth of these visions (whereby the Word of God, who hath the lineaments of future things in his mind, as Irenæus speaks, represented how God would hereafter dispose of the affairs of the world) than his possessing himself of a kingdom, and persuading so great a part of mankind to submit to him, though a king invisible, merely by the preaching of such men as St. John? The event hath proved it was no delusion when he heard those *great voices* in heaven, saying, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*[t]. Which was accomplished also with very great speed, as he saw represented by an angel which appeared *flying* in the midst of heaven, *having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth*[u]. That motion of *flying* seems to signify the haste which the great ministers of Christ made (who are compared in this book to angels) to publish his gospel to the world: which had mighty success, because it came with authority from heaven, as is represented by the angels flying ἐν μεσουρανήματι, *in the midst* of the air, between heaven and earth, to denote something he had in hand, which was decreed above, and to be done here below. The greatest powers on earth indeed set themselves against it, and *made war with the Lamb*[x]; that is, persecuted Christianity. But he foretells his conquests, even over these kingdoms who were such furious enemies as to seek to destroy his religion. For which he gives only these two reasons, because God had made him *Lord of lords,* and *King of kings;* and because those who followed him were such *choice persons,* that their patient constant perseverance in his service, to which he had called them, helped to

[t] xi. 15. [u] xiv. 6. [x] xvii. 14.

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overcome his and their enemies, and to bring them in subjection to him.

I can think of nothing that can be objected against what hath been said, but two things; which deserve briefly to be considered. One of them concerns this last particular now handled, and the other seems to cross all that hath been delivered in this chapter. Against what hath now been alleged from the Revelations it may be objected, that this book of visions was doubted of among some of the ancient Christians. To which the answer is very obvious, that there was a particular reason why this book did not always go along with the rest into every body's hands, and by that means being not so generally known was afterward questioned; because the making of it as public as the Christian doctrine might have too much incensed the power of the Roman empire, whose downfall is here so plainly predicted. Yet it was not kept so private but that it is cited very early, both as a divine book and as the writing of St. John the apostle, by those who deserve to be believed. Justin Martyr had that opinion of it, and so had Irenæus, as I have already said, and Theophilus Antiochenus and Origen; especially St. Cyprian, who, I have observed, produces testimonies out of no book of the New Testament so oft as this. From whence he encourages Christians to follow their Master and all that worthy company who had hazarded their lives for him. "It being the peculiar glory," saith he[y], "of our time, that whereas ancient examples might be numbered, now there is such an exuberant abundance of virtue and faith, that Christian martyrs cannot. So the Revelation witnesses: *I beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, with white robes, and palms in their hands*[z]. *And these,* he was told, *are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*" I shall not produce the words of any of the rest, nor of divers others, who without any manner of doubting pronounce this to be the *Revelation of the Word of God to his servant John.*

But pass to the other thing which may be alleged to the prejudice of the whole foregoing discourse. For I produce no-

[y] De Exhort. Martyr. [cap. 11. p. 181.] [z] vii. 9.

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thing, some may say, but the testimony which one gives of himself, which all confess to be of no validity. This Word of God himself saith so, as this very apostle hath recorded, *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true*[a]. And yet what is all that St. Stephen saw, or that he spake to St. Paul and St. John, but his witness of himself?

I answer in his own words also, which you read in another place of that Gospel[b], where the Pharisees objecting to him his own concession[c], that a man's testimony to himself is nothing worth; he seems to revoke, but in truth only explains it, by telling them in terms quite contrary, *though I bear record of myself, my record is true.* The former words are not so to be understood as if what a man says of himself were always false, or not to be regarded when he hath a concurrent testimony from others; no, it may be *true*, though it will persuade nobody else to believe it without other evidence. That is all our Saviour means in the fifth chapter; if he had alone borne witness to himself, and there had been no other testimony given him, it had not been *true*, that is, not a valid, unexceptionable testimony, by which he might demand credit from them. So the word *true* is used[d], in the sense of the law, which required two or three witnesses for the establishing or settling any thing in question. They had no reason to believe he was God's Son, but might still have disputed it, if he had been the only person that said so, and could have brought no other to witness for him. And yet notwithstanding he tells them here, that even in this case his testimony of himself is *true*, as truth is opposed to falsehood; though it wanted that truth which was necessary to make it a legal testimony. That is, though it could not have passed in law, nor stopped the mouth of gainsayers, because it was a single testimony, and the law required more than one; yet it would have had nothing of a lie in it, but his words would have been perfectly *true*, when he affirmed himself to be the *Son of God.*

But this was not his case. He alone did not bear witness to himself, but there were others beside him who bare witness of him, and said the same thing that he did (as he shows[e]), and said it before he assumed this name to himself. And therefore

[a] John v. 31. [b] viii. 14. [c] Ver. 13. [d] viii. 17.
[e] v. 32, 33, 36, &c.

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his testimony, which single would have no strength, being joined to the other is of great force, and ought to be regarded. He did not desire to be received merely because he said he was the Son of God (though he ought not to be accounted a liar for saying so alone), no, he referred them to other proof of that truth. But when they had heard and considered them, then there was reason they should hear what he affirmed concerning himself; and not think the worse of him because he spake those words, which were no other than the very words of the Father, whereby he bare witness to him. So he tells them in John viii. 17. 18: *It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.* That is, you have no reason to disparage my testimony of myself, because I do but repeat the very same thing which the Father hath said before me. For though alone (as I have confessed heretofore) my testimony of myself is worth nothing, and cannot challenge belief; yet, added unto so high a testimony as his, it ought to be duly regarded and accepted.

But besides this, I must add another consideration of great moment; which is, that the testimony of the Word concerning himself now that he is in the heavens is of great validity, even singly considered; though it had no such authority alone, when he was upon the earth. For during his stay here on earth it could not appear by his bare saying so, that he was the Son of God, the King of Israel; because he was in a poor, mean, and low condition, altogether unlike a king: and therefore, if the Father and the Spirit had not testified so much, none could have believed on him. But when he was in the heavens, then what he said of himself carried great authority and power with it; because he could not say those words to any one, but he must appear as a King in glory. There were things as well as words to speak for him. At the same time that he bare witness of himself, they to whom he spake must needs see the truth of his testimony by the royal state and majesty wherein they beheld him.

If the question should be, whether a person be alive, his own appearing in court would be the best testimony that could be given of it. If whether such a one be a king, his sitting upon his throne, with his crown on his head, in his royal palace, and

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his ministers round about him, would be the surest evidence that could be desired to put it out of doubt. In this case therefore, where the question is whether Jesus be the Son of God or no, there cannot be expected a better resolution of it than his own witness to himself by appearing upon the throne of his glory. There several persons of unblemished credit beheld him, and had the confidence to venture their lives upon the certain knowledge they had that they were not deceived. From thence he spake to them, and directed them to speak and carry his messages to others, that they might believe on the name of the Son of God. And let it but be remembered (which I noted at the beginning) that we are now examining those witnesses which speak from heaven, and not those which speak on the earth; and then you will soon discern that these testimonies of the Word, though concerning himself, ought to be received with great reverence, and to be judged very full and powerful to prove Jesus to be the Son of God. Especially since, besides his own word for it, we have also the word of the Father, who several times called him his Son, and that before he took this honour to himself.

A PRAYER.

Let all mankind therefore honour thee, O blessed Jesus, even as they honour the Father! Be thou adored every where upon earth with the same reverence and love wherewith all the angels in heaven worship thee! whom they and we acknowledge to be the Lord; the *Word of God;* the *Wisdom of the Father;* the *bright morning Star;* the *Light of the world;* the *Prince of life;* the *Heir of all things;* the *KING OF KINGS*, and the *LORD OF LORDS; God blessed for ever.*

"Thou art the King of glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father;" the Beginner and the Finisher of our faith; the Judge of the world; the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey thee. O how happy are they that know thee, and steadfastly believe in thee, and sincerely love thee, and heartily obey thee, and have a good hope that thou wilt bless them, and employ thy power for their promotion to that glory wherein thou reignest! I rejoice to hear thee say that thou, who *wast dead, art alive for evermore, Amen; and hast the keys of hell and of death.* I thank thee for appearing so often, to assure our souls that thou sittest at the right hand of God, and hast all power in heaven and in earth. Great

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is the consolation which thou hast given us, by the sight of that glory wherein thy first martyr beheld thee, ready to succour all thy faithful servants. Marvellous was thy work, O Lord, for which all thy church will for ever praise thee, in calling St. Paul to be an apostle, *separated unto the gospel of God.* Adored be thy glorious Majesty, which appeared to him for this purpose, to make him a *minister and a witness of what he saw and heard, that he might go and open the eyes of the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in thee.* O how full of comfort is that revelation which thou hast made of thyself to thy servant John! who received the brightest discoveries of thy glory in heaven, when he was in the most desolate condition upon earth! who beheld thy care over thy church, and thy conquests over thine enemies; thy priestly and thy royal power, to the perpetual joy of those that love thee, and the terror of all those that oppose thee.

O blessed Jesus, far be it from any of us in the least to contradict thy will, who art so highly advanced *far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.* May every Christian soul be so sensibly affected with the belief of thy glory, as to prostrate itself before thee, and say with the same spirit that thy blessed apostle St. Paul did when thou appearedst unto him, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* May that ardent love burn in every one of our breasts towards thee and towards one another, which was in thy beloved disciple who bare record of thee, and testified to us these things! And may none of us prove so false and unkind as to *leave our first love;* but our *work, and charity, and service, and faith, and patience,* may be ever commended by thee, *and the last be more than the first!*

Then shall we be able with a cheerful countenance to look up unto thee, and to think of thy majesty and glory with exultation and triumph, and not with terror and amazement of spirit. *We will joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall we rejoice!* We will rejoice even in the midst of tribulation; and *though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil;* but steadfastly looking up unto heaven, call upon thee, O Lord Jesus, and beseech thee *to receive our spirits.* Into thy hands be they recommended both now and ever, with most earnest desires and hope that thou wilt "help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood," and "make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting." Amen.

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CHAP. IV.

Concerning the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

WE have heard the Word speak enough in his own behalf; and I do not think it needful to hear that witness any farther. Let us attend now to the testimony of the third person in the holy Trinity, and hear what the Holy Ghost saith; who, we shall find upon due examination, agrees perfectly in the same thing, and declares that *Jesus is the Son of God.* Witness that glorious appearance of the Divine Spirit upon him when he was baptized, and the great gifts and endowments thereof, wherewith ever after that he was filled himself and filled others. For here we may note three things, as we did in the opening of the testimony of the other two witnesses.

I.

The first is, that when the Spirit of God descended upon him immediately after his baptism, and in an illustrious manner remained on him (as St. John Baptist testifies it did, John i. 32, 33.), then the Holy Ghost bare witness of him that he was the Son of God. In our reflections upon which, we are to consider distinctly first how it *descended,* and then that it *remained* and abode upon him.

And for the better understanding of both these we must know, that when the Jews would express any visible appearance of the majesty and glory of God, they call it the *Schekinah,* that is, the *habitation* or *dwelling;* because God showed himself thereby to be extraordinarily present, and that he did, as it were, dwell in that place, to afford those to whom he so manifested himself his gracious help, comfort, or instruction. This is the name they give even to that presence of God which was in the most holy place (the glory of the Lord which appeared upon the cherubims), because he dwelt there, and took up his rest among them, by this token of his presence with them. So he himself had spoken, Exod. xxv. 8. *Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may* dwell *among them:* that is, *the glory of the Lord, which* abode *upon mount Sinai* (xxiv. 16), came and took up its residence there in the sanctuary. From these two places they gave it the name of *dwelling* or *abode;* and tell us, that "from the day that this *Schekinah,* as they speak, or Divine presence dwelling among them, rested on mount Sinai at the giving of the law, it never departed from

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Israel till the destruction of the house of the first sanctuary by the king of Babylon. After that the Divinity, or this glorious token of the Divine presence, did not dwell among them." They are the words of R. Bechai upon Gen. xlv.

But that which had been so long absent returned now in a far more glorious manner than ever: not to dwell in an house of stone, but in *the temple of our Saviour's body*[h], as he calls John ii. 21: for when Jesus was baptized, *lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him*[i]. Every word of this verse is very observable: for the *opening of the heavens*, in the prophetical writings (as Grotius hath observed upon Rev. xix. 11), still precedes some great vision: and that which he, with John Baptist, now saw was the *Spirit of God;* that is, such a glorious appearance of the divine Majesty as I before mentioned. For the Rabbins often call the *Ruach Hakkodesh*, or the Holy Ghost, by the name of *Schekinah*, or the divine presence gloriously appearing among them. So Elias expressly tells us in his *Tisbi*[k], and gives this reason for it, "because it rested or dwelt upon the prophets," and was a great token (I may add) of God's presence with them. Whence it is that where the Hebrew text (as he goes on) saith, *The spirit of Jacob revived*[l], R. Solomon expounds it thus, the *Schekinah*, or the Holy Ghost, rested on him; which was departed and, as it were, extinct before, because of the grief and sorrow wherein he had been drowned. For the *Holy Ghost*, say they, rests not upon the melancholy, but only on those who are of a cheerful spirit[m]. Thus when Hannah said to Eli, who fancied she was drunk, *No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit*[n], the Talmud expounds it in this manner, "Thou art not to govern in this case, the *Schekinah* and the Holy Ghost is not upon thee;" as appears by this, that thou hast judged me guilty when I am innocent.

It is all one then in their language (as I observed also before in the conclusion of the second chapter) to say that the *divine Majesty*, or that the *Holy Ghost*, is upon any person. And therefore I doubt not but there was a glorious appearance of

[h] Matt. iii. 16.
[i] Vocab. שכן. [p. 245.]
[k] Gen. xlv. 27.
[l] [The Hebrew proverb to this effect is quoted by Fagius and Cartwright (inter Critic. Sacr. ad loc.), and by Plantavitius, Florileg. Rabbin. § 1726. p. 331.]
[m] [1 Sam. i. 15.]

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the majesty of God at our Saviour's baptism: some great unusual brightness, signifying the divine presence and the Spirit of God coming to dwell in him. It is not indeed mentioned in express words that there was such a *Schekinah* or majestical appearance of the glory of the Lord; but it must be understood to be meant by the Πνεῦμα Θεοῦ, 'Spirit of God.' According to the dialect of that nation, who called the Holy Ghost, as I said, by the name of the divine Majesty or presence, and so might call that Majesty by the name of the Holy Ghost or Spirit of God. And Justin Martyr saith expressly[l], in his disputation with the Jews, that at our Saviour's baptism, πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, 'a fire was lighted in Jordan:' that is, as I understand it, such a divine glory appeared as there was among the ancient Israelites, which had, I told you, the resemblance of a very bright fire: which so good a man would not have had the boldness to affirm, if it had not been the constant tradition which passed among them, or rather the constant sense they put upon this place. Just as when the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, a fiery substance gathered itself about their heads in token of a divine presence among them; so when our Lord himself was baptized with water, there was the like, but far more glorious appearance; which, spreading itself from his head round about, made the river, out of which he was newly come, look as if it were on a flame, as a sign that he should baptize, *not with water, but with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* And so Grotius hath observed, that in the Gospel of the Nazarenes[m] there were these words, εὐθὺς περιέλαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα, 'straightway a great light shone round about the place:' which the Syrian churches also acknowledge in their Liturgy[n]. All which make it apparent that holy men thus understood the descent of the *Holy Ghost* as I have explained it. And indeed St. Luke tells us that it descended σωματικῷ εἴδει, *in a bodily form or appearance*[o]. There was some visible matter broke out of the heavens, which being the place of light and glory, we can expound to be nothing else but some very splendid body, a bright-shining light

[l] [Dial. cum Tryph. § 88. p. 185 E.]

[m] [Or that of the Ebionites,— Epiphan. Hæres. xxx. § 13. tom. i. p. 138 B.]

[n] [Sever. Alexandr. de Rit. Bapt. in Max. Bibl. vet. Patr. tom. xii. p. 732 H. Compare the Office for Baptism in the Syriac Liturgy of the Church of Antioch, — Assemann. Cod. Lit. Eccl. Univ. tom. i. p. 226.]

[o] Luke iii. 22.

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formed by the Spirit of God, which *came down* from above just *as a dove*, with wings spread, is observed to do, and *lighted upon* our Saviour's head.

These three last phrases are remarkable: for when the evangelists say it *came down*, they speak in the constant style of the holy language concerning the appearance of the majesty of God[p]. Of whom, as Maimonides adds, the Scripture speaks in the same manner when it describes his bestowing any gifts or vouchsafing any special token of his favour upon men: "For we being in a low condition in respect of him who is the most High, not in respect of place, but of his essence, majesty, and power, whensoever he is pleased to give wisdom to any one, or to pour down the gift of prophecy upon him, that abode of the spirit of prophecy, or the habitation of the majesty and presence of God in any place, is called his coming down; and the taking away of prophecy, or the recession of the divine Majesty, is called his going up[q]:" for which he cites Numb. xi. 17, Gen. xxxv. 13. In this language the holy writers of the New Testament here speak: who knew very well that the divine Spirit is every where, and doth not move from place to place, but say it *came down*, because there was an outward visible appearance of a great glory, which indeed descended from above and declared him, on whom such a majesty dwelt, to be filled with the gifts of wisdom and prophecy, and all other powers of the Holy Ghost. And in the same manner they express the unexpected communication of divine gifts to the Gentiles, on whom the Holy Ghost *fell* or *came down*, as they heard the word[r]: that is, there was a sensible token of the divine presence among them, though no visible majesty descended, for *they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.*

But here, there were both all the gifts of the *Holy Ghost* bestowed, and also such a visible glorious majesty as there was at the giving of the law: which not only came down, but *lit upon our Saviour*, as that glory did on the top of Mount Sinai[s]. This was a thing, as you shall hear, which was never known before, that the *glory of the Lord* should come and rest upon any person. It could denote him to be no less than

[p] Exod. xix. 11, 20.
[q] More Nevoch. part 1. cap. 10. [p. 14.]
[r] Acts x. 45; xi. 15.
[s] Exod. xix, 18, 20.

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the *Holy One of God:* from whom, as from God's most holy place, he would hereafter communicate all his blessings to men.

And the more fully to express this, it is very observable that the *glory* which now appeared came down *as a dove* doth: which is the very manner wherein R. Solomon describes the descent of the divine Majesty in former times. "The throne of God," saith he, upon those words, *The Spirit of God moved*[t], &c., "stood in the air, and hovered over the face of the waters, by the Spirit of his mouth, who is most blessed, and by his Word, just as a dove stretches her wings over her nest." For it is not certain whether this glorious appearance had the form of a dove, or only descended in the same manner as a dove doth, when it came upon our Saviour and encircled his head.

But that there was such a *glorious majesty* appeared and lighted on him, ought not to seem incredible to any man that believes the holy books of the Old Testament; as Origen[u] shows against Celsus, who foolishly brings in a Jew speaking against this apparition. If he had made an Epicurean, saith he, deride this report, there had been some congruity in it; but it is ridiculous to pin such words upon a Jew, who believes things altogether as strange, nay, far more wonderful. To pass by what we read that God said to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and others, what doth he think concerning Ezekiel? who says that *the heavens were opened, and he saw visions of God*[v]: that *this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.* And the same Isaiah reports concerning himself, *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne*[x], &c. Which of these are more to be credited? Ezekiel, who says, *the heavens were opened*, &c., and Isaiah, who writes that he *saw the Lord*, &c., or Jesus, who says that *the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him?* "This is enough to stop the mouth of any Jew, especially since the power of Jesus (as Origen proceeds) not only then when he was on earth far excelled theirs, but still remains now that he is in heaven, for the conversion and betterment of those who by him believe in God."

[t] Gen. i. 2. [u] Lib. 1. [§ 43. tom. i. p. 359.] [v] i. 1. and ver. 28. [x] vi. 1.

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And as for others, he tells Celsus, that all those who admit Providence confess that God hath sometimes forewarned men in their sleep of things which much concerned their safety. And therefore it is no such strange thing if that power which figures the mind in a dream should impress the same or the like form upon it when a man is awake; and represent things as sensibly to him as if he saw them with his eyes and heard them with his ears. And why that should not be as really seen, if God please, which is represented to a man in his imagination, nobody can give any reason.

As for that which Celsus objects, that the Gospel never tells us our Saviour was wont to mention this and appeal to it in his preaching to the people; he tells him that he did not mind how unseemly it was for our Saviour to divulge himself what was seen and heard at Jordan, who forbad his disciples to publish that which they beheld and heard on the holy mount. There was a fit time for the open proclaiming of both by others, not by himself. For the manners of our Saviour were far from that περιαντολογία, vain ostentation and much talk of himself, which such a man as Celsus might be guilty of. He chose by his works, rather than by his words, to tell them that he was the Christ. Which made the Jews say, *How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly*[v]. So he did; but it was by that which was more convincing than his testimony of himself could then be: *I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me*[x]. That one work which he had wrought just before was so miraculous, that the like had not been heard of *since the world began*[y]. For he had opened the eyes of a man who was born blind, as they themselves could not deny; for the man's parents testified that he could never see till now: and he affirmed it was Jesus who had given him his sight. If they had not been blinder than he, this might have opened their eyes to see who our Saviour was, without any further telling. For what could he say of himself more than this miracle spake? which others reported, not he. It told them loudly enough, would they have heard, that he had the power of God in him; one of whose prerogatives it is *to open the eyes of the*

[v] John x. 24. [x] Ver. 25. [y] ix. 32.

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blind[z]. And John Baptist also had told them plainly, that *he saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him*[a]. Here was an unexceptionable witness of the truth of this story, which John presently published. And they had reason to believe him, because he that authorized him to administer that baptism which they received gave him this for a sign whereby he should know the Christ when he saw him: *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God*[b].

He could be no less, on whom such a divine glory not only descended, but also *remained*, and took up its abode with him. That is the last thing to be considered, and the chiefest of all. He had not a mere glance of this visible Majesty, which did not make a transient appearance; but he saw it *remaining* on him. It stayed for some time there, as if it intended to make him its habitation and dwelling-place. And so it did: for as *he* saw the visible divine majesty or glory remaining on him then, so the thing signified by it continued alway; and made *all* see, if they would attend, that he was the sanctuary or most holy place, in which God was, and had taken up his residence for ever. The body of Jesus, as I said before, is now become the *temple of God;* not made by man, but by God himself in the virgin's womb. There God manifested himself perpetually by sensible effects, as I shall show you presently; declaring Jesus to be his Son, in whom *the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.*

After this visible majesty disappeared, the presence of God within him was very apparent. For he came away from Jordan, saith St. Luke, *full of the Holy Ghost*[c]*:* and having been tempted a while in the wilderness, *he returned* from thence, *in the power of the Spirit into Galilee*[d]. There he taught in his own city, and opened the book at that very place of Isaiah where he said, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*[e]*:* which scripture was that day fulfilled in their ears. And at Cana, in that country, he began to work miracles, and *manifested forth his glory*[f]*:* that is, showed indeed that the divine majesty

[z] Ps. cxlvi. 8. [a] John i. 32. [b] Ver. 33, 34. [c] iv. 1. [d] Ver. 14. [e] Ver. 18, 21. [f] John ii. 11.

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spoken of before remained in him. Of which glory they did not see so little as a flash or two, but *they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father* [g]. He cast about every where such rays of glory and majesty as declared him to be no less person than God's *only begotten Son:* and these they *beheld,* and were constant eyewitnesses of, to the end of his life. For *he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him* [h]. This was all his business, to bestow benefits upon mankind, and to relieve those who were otherways helpless, but only by a divine power. As was notorious in his frequent dispossession of devils, and opening the eyes of him who was blind from his birth; and after that, raising Lazarus from the dead, in which great work they saw the glory of God [i]: who *did not give the Spirit by measure to him;* that is, with such restriction as he himself gave it to his apostles at the first; *but the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands,* as the Baptist speaks [k]. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell* [l]: so that none could have any thing of the Spirit but from his hands, and he could communicate what he pleased. Which is a sign that he was the place where the divine majesty and the Holy Spirit now dwelt, and had taken up its residence among men; who must all repair to him, if they would receive the Holy Ghost, or any blessing from above.

What greater argument could there be that he was the Son of God than this, that he had *all things* now *put into his hands,* to do what he pleased on *earth;* and received the *Holy Ghost* in such a visible majesty, as a pledge that he should shortly have all power in *heaven* too, at the right hand of God? It was fit that this glorious testimony of the Holy Ghost to him should be accompanied with the voice of God, which came out of that or the like cloud, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* So we shall have still farther reasons to acknowledge him, if we do but make these following reflections upon what hath been here discoursed.

One is, that here was not so little as the appearance of an angel to him, by whom God declared his will to the prophets; but a far more illustrious manifestation of the divine glory,

[g] i. 14. [h] Acts x. 38. [i] John xi. 40. [k] John iii. 34, 35. [l] Coloss. i. 19.

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which came down upon him and declared him more than a prophet. Maimonides doubts not to say [m], that "all prophecy was by the mediation of angels [n]." Moses himself began to be a prophet by this means: *The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in the bush* [o]. For which cause, he thinks, God afterward appointed *two cherubims* to cover the ark, that the people might be bred up in the belief of angels. And God is said *to dwell* between them, and *to ride* upon them; because all prophecy was carried by them from God to men. But here is something far beyond this way of communication between God and men. For not an angel appeared or spake unto him: but that divine glory which dwelt between the cherubims descends upon him, and makes him its restingplace; and God himself speaks to him at the same time out of that glory, calling him his *Son*, and bidding all *hear him*. This was a manifest declaration of his high and singular prerogative; and a sign that no less than the *fulness of the Godhead* dwelt in him. So that he knew, as I said before, the mind of God, not by visions and dreams, or by mediation of angels, but by a more intimate familiarity with God, dwelling and residing in him.

For you may observe further (which is another thing very remarkable), that though there had been formerly an appearance of a *Schekinah;* of the Divine presence, that is, or glory of God, when the gifts of the Holy Ghost were imparted to some persons: yet we never read that this *Schekinah* came down upon any man, much less that it remained on him, but upon Jesus only. When the seventy elders were to receive a portion of Moses his spirit, God ordered them to be brought unto the tabernacle of the congregation, and says, he would come down and talk with Moses *there*, and *take of the spirit which was upon him, and put it upon them* [p]. Accordingly you read [q], that as they stood round about the tabernacle, *the Lord came down in a cloud* [r]; that is, in such a manner as now the Holy Ghost descended at our Lord's baptism. But he came not down upon them who were about the tabernacle; but rather (as in the next story, and at other times) *stood in the door of the tabernacle* [s], from whence he spake to Moses, and took of the spirit which was on him, and gave it to the seventy elders.

[m] More Nevoch. part 3. cap. 45. [p. 476.] [n] Gen. xvi. 9; xxii. 15.
[o] Exod. iii. 2. [p] Numb. xi. 16, 17. [q] Ver. 24. [r] Ver. 25. [s] xii. 5.

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Whereas here the Holy Ghost came down in a visible glory, and pitched upon Jesus himself; who was the tabernacle now where God chose to dwell. For this *Schekinah*, as you have heard, or divine majesty, not only *lighted* on him, but rested there and *remained* in him: as if God had told him who saw it both descend and abide on him, *Here will I dwell for ever, for therein do I delight*[t]. This demonstrated him to be more than any ever was; not merely a great prophet, but the very Son of God. Never was there such a crown prepared for any man's head but his. Never before did the hand of heaven put such a diadem of glory upon any person, as this which encircled, and, as I may say, was bound about our Saviour. This can be accounted nothing less than the testimony of the HOLY GHOST to him: that he was the *Holy One* of God, the *Anointed* from above, the *King* of God's people, and *the Heir of all things.*

Thus, St. Peter, you know, expresses the honour which was now done him, when he tells Cornelius and his company that *God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power*[u]. The Holy Ghost came down as an holy oil from the heavenly sanctuary, which, being poured on him in such a glorious majesty, gave him authority to be called the *Son of God*, and made him *his King*. So John Baptist acknowledged him, you remember, as soon as he beheld this strange sight, *and bare record* of it unto others, that *this person* (thus anointed) *was the Son of God*[v]. He was now invested with a royal power) (for that is the meaning of his being *anointed*,) and we ought, I shall show you, to look upon this as a solemn inauguration of him in his kingdom, to which he had now a title given him, together with some part of a kingly authority. And if there be any truth in the traditions of the Hebrews concerning their own ceremonies, there was something remarkable in it that this *anointing* him with the holy oil from above was immediately after he came up out of the waters of Jordan: for Maimonides and the doctors in the Talmud tell us that they never anointed a king of the house of David but at the side of a fountain or of a river of water: which was the reason that David commanded his servants *to bring his son Solomon down*

[t] [Ps. cxxxii. 14.] [u] Acts x. 38. [v] John i. 34.

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to Gihon[x], and there anoint him king over Israel. For this Gihon was a little river, as R. Solomon there notes, or the head of a river nigh Jerusalem, which discharged itself into the brook Kidron, and in the Chaldee Paraphrase is called by the newer name of Siloah. It was made very famous afterward by that memorable work of Hezekiah[y], who, to take away the advantage any enemy might make of it in a siege, stopped up the course of its water, and brought it by channels underground into the city of David. At this place, without the walls of Jerusalem, not in the city, *Zadok and Nathan anointed king Solomon:* that is, one of them poured out the oil, and the other anointed his head; drawing a circle with the oil upon it. For so they all say the kings were anointed, in the form of a crown, to denote the royal dignity: which if it be true, and that they made choice of such a place to show (as they will have it) the perpetuity of their kingdom, because rivers run alway, though the cities which stand by them decay and may be demolished; then it is very observable that our Lord was *anointed* or crowned with the Holy Ghost by the river *Jordan* rather than in any other place, to denote him indeed to be the king of Israel, who should *sit upon the throne of his father David,* as the angel said, *for ever and ever.*

But this I mention only by the way. The chief thing to be noted is, that now he began to reign, and entered upon his kingdom, called the *kingdom of God,* and the *kingdom of heaven:* which John Baptist told them was at hand. For this descent of the Holy Ghost in such a visible majesty did not merely give him a title to the divine kingdom which was to be erected by him in the world; and assured him that he was God's Christ, or *Anointed,* that is, *his King;* and endued him with such royal qualities as fitted him for that office: but it made him a King by conferring several branches of the regal power on him, and by giving him authority to exercise them in the world. It is true indeed, he did not actually take possession of his kingdom, nor exercise his royal power completely, and the time of his enthroning was deferred, till he had accomplished the will of God other ways, and *by the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour* in the

[x] 1 Kings i. 33. [y] 2 Chron. xxxii. 30.

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heavens. But that he did not act only as a prophet all his lifetime, but likewise took upon him the person of a king (or acted as a royal prophet) doing many things which only the royal authority could do, is a most manifest truth in the holy story.

Which cannot be better explained than by the parallel case of his father David, who was the exact type and figure of him. He was *anointed* by Samuel some years before he sat upon the *throne of the Lord*. But as that *unction* was the designation of him to the royal dignity, and a pawn or pledge of the possession of it in due time; so ever after he achieved very great things, which spoke him to be the person designed by God for his kingdom (as it is called, I told you, 2 Chron. ix. 8); and he also received some portion of it before he enjoyed it all entirely[z]. Just thus did our blessed Saviour, after he was *anointed* with the *Holy Ghost*, give several proofs that he was a *King* (which is the meaning, you have heard, of the word *Christ*) and had received some of the power belonging to that high office. For, first, he cast out devils and cured all diseases at any time when he pleased, only with his powerful word, and for nothing: which were acts of such royal bounty, that he had reason to say, *If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you*[a]. And, secondly, over and above this, he forgave men's sins, and remitted their offences, by releasing many from the punishment of them[b]: which every one knows is a power wherewith only kings and sovereign princes are invested. And thirdly, he raised a man from the dead, and released him even from the prison of the grave: which certainly was the act of a king, and of that King who had *power over all flesh*. So Martha herself understood it, when she makes it all one to raise the dead, and to be that King whom God promised to send them: for when our Saviour saith to her, *I am the resurrection and the life, &c. believest thou this?* her answer follows in these terms: *Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*[c]. And lastly, the very preaching the mind of God, and publishing the gospel of the kingdom with such authority as he did, was the part of a

[z] 2 Sam. ii. 4, 9; v. 3. [a] Luke xi. 20. [b] Luke v. 20. [c] John xi. 27.

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king; for so he interprets the word *kingdom*, when he stood before Pilate[d]: where you may learn that all this is not the mere collection of reason from the observations we make as we read the holy story, but that which our Lord himself affirms in express words when he was examined by Pilate upon this very point. For our Lord seeming to grant that he had a *kingdom*, though not of this world, but heavenly, the governor asks him again, *Art thou a King then*[e]*?* to which he answers him roundly, *Thou sayest that I am a King*, i. e. Yes, I am; it is as thou sayest. So the rest of the evangelists report his answer: *Thou sayest it*[f]; which is as much, in their language, as to say, *It is so;* thou hast said right, *I am a King.* This is *that good confession which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate*, which the apostle propounds to Timothy's imitation[g]. He now openly owned, with the danger of his life, that, as mean as he appeared at present, he was appointed by God to be his Vicegerent, the King of the world: which he had manifested by several acts of kingly power ever since he was *anointed with the Holy Ghost.*

And he had said the same before, when he was brought to answer for himself in the chief council of the Jews: where the high priest asked him, and said unto him, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am*[h]. Which words, *I am*, are the plain interpretation of the other phrases in the rest of the evangelists, *Thou hast said*[i], and, *Ye say that I am*[k]; where you read, that, hearing this confession, they forbare to produce any more witnesses, and condemned him out of his own mouth[l]: that is, they passed the sentence of death upon him as a counterfeit (so they pretended) of that royal prophet whom they expected to come into the world. Under this character they delivered him to Pilate, hoping that he would likewise condemn him for treason against Cæsar; whose authority, they would have him believe, our Saviour subverted, by saying, *He himself was Christ a King*[m]. So the whole multitude of his disciples had a little before proclaimed him (though not such a King as would do Cæsar any harm) when they met him at the foot of the Mount of Olives, and with great joy praised

[d] John xviii. 37. [e] Ver. 36. [f] Matt. xxvii. 11. Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. [g] 1 Tim. vi. 13. [h] Mark xiv. 61, 62.
[i] Matt. xxvi. 64. [k] Luke xxii. 70. [l] Ver. 71. [m] Luke xxiii. 2.

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God for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest*[o]: that is, let heaven prosper his kingdom till it be made most glorious.

There needs no more be said to show that he was made a King by this unction of the Holy Ghost: though the full possession of his kingdom and exercise of his whole royal power he did not attain till he was advanced to his throne of glory in the heavens; when he received from the Father the *promise of the Holy Ghost* to bestow upon others[p], and poured it down as an holy oil on their heads to create them ministers in his kingdom.

That was a further witness to our Saviour, as I should now proceed to show you; but that it may be fit, before I part with this, to take notice that this testimony which the Holy Ghost now gave to him, when it *anointed* him at his baptism, was so remarkable, that Mahomet hath not forgot to leave a remembrance of it in his Alcoran: where he brings in God speaking after this manner: "We have already sent a book (i. e. the law) to Moses, and afterward we sent the prophets; and to Jesus, the Son of Mary, we have sent most known (or eminent) virtues, and we gave him a testimony, and strengthened him with the Holy Ghost[q]." In which words a great paraphrast of their's upon the Alcoran, by "known virtues or powers" given to our Saviour, understands the gift of working miracles; as, opening the eyes of the blind, cleansing lepers, and raising the dead: though by the "Holy Ghost," they generally understand no more than the angel Gabriel, who, for the manifestation of him, (as that paraphrast speaks,) was "sent along with him, as his companion, whithersoever he went." Which notion, I imagine, they drew out of the Jewish writers, who say that such glorious apparitions, as that at Christ's baptism, were made by the ministry of angels, who were the chariot of God, in which he was said to come down to men.

But whatsoever Mahomet's meaning was, when he says "God strengthened him with the Holy Ghost," it is an open acknowledgment of that which the divine writers have recorded; which was so famous and notorious, that infidels

[o] Luke xix. 38. [p] Acts ii. 33. [q] Vid. Seld. de Synedr. lib. 2. cap. 4. n. 4. [tom. i. col. 1242. Compare Sale's Koran, chap. 2. p. 12.]

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could not deny it. Nay, some of that false prophet's followers have said expressly, that "the Holy Ghost is no creature, but hath a singular production proper to itself; for it is not a spirit after the manner of other spirits, because it is the Spirit of God: the spirit of a man is a creature, but the Spirit of God is not[r]." It was more than an angelical presence then that was in our Saviour, of whose birth indeed the angel Gabriel brought the news to his mother, but he did not pretend that she should conceive by his power; no, he says expressly, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* And therefore at his new birth, as I may call it, to the office of a king, it was the very same power of the Highest, which in a visible manner then overshadowed him and remained on him, to testify that he was, as the angel said, the *Son of God.* To conclude this, the angelical salutation to the blessed virgin is after this manner recited in the Alcoran, in the next chapter to that before named. "O Mary, God sends thee a good messenger, by his Word which is out of himself: his name is Messias, or Jesus Christ the Son of Mary, powerful in this present world, and in the world to come." Where the forenamed paraphrast says, he was powerful in the present world "by prophecy," and in the world to come "by intercession and celestial preparation." He should have added also what he said before, that he was powerful here by that which is properly called *power*, the healing diseases, opening blind men's eyes, and such like works of wonders; the divine majesty resting on him and abiding in him in so glorious a manner, that he might properly be called the *temple of God.*

For whatsoever demonstrations there were of God's presence in the tabernacle of Moses, or in the temple of Solomon, (which were alike filled with the *glory of the Lord*[s],) the very same tokens there were of his presence in our Saviour. Nay, it is easy to show that he manifested himself, in all his glorious attributes, more in our Saviour's person than ever he did in either of those places. And it will be such an evident demonstration of the truth I am asserting, and give such light to this testimony of the Holy Ghost, who appeared in that excellent

[r] Vid. ib. [col. 1243.]

[s] Exod. xl. 34, 35. 2 Chron. v. 13, 14.

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majesty which descended on him, that I think it will be worth my pains to make good the parallel in some instances.

I. And first you may observe, that from the holy place in the tabernacle God declared his mind and will, and made known to his people what he would have done. There God told Moses, *he would meet and commune with him of all things which he would give him in commandment to the children of Israel*[t]. And we are told the manner of it, *When he was gone into the tabernacle, he heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark, from between the two cherubims*[u]. From thence God gave out to Moses his λογία, (as the apostle calls them[v],) *oracles*, or such words of direction and command as were necessary for the good government and preservation of his people, whose laws, statutes, and judgments came from the holy oracle in the sanctuary of God. This was a marvellous favour of Heaven to them, though nothing comparable to the manifestation of the wisdom and counsel and will of God by our blessed Saviour: who not only revealed his mind more clearly and abundantly, thereby showing he is the temple of God; but told us such things as never came from the former holy place, things which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither did they enter into the heart of man to conceive.* He was the λόγος, or 'Word of God,' in this sense as well as any other; because he acquaints us with God's mind, and declares to all mankind his sacred will; and, as from an holy oracle, utters things secret from the foundation of the world. For *the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth*[x]. The word *full* relates to λόγος, the 'Word,' in the beginning of the verse, (the other part of the verse being inserted between in parenthesis,) and carries this sense in it, that Jesus, being fully acquainted with all the gracious counsels of God concerning men, hath declared them to us, and made us also acquainted with them. He was so full of truth, that he calls himself ἡ ἀλήθεια, *the truth* itself[y]. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, he hath declared him*[z]. That is, he hath made God visible to us; he, as an ἐξηγητὴς, 'expounder' or 'interpreter' of another's mind, hath

[t] Exod. xxv. 22. [u] Numb. vii. 89. [v] Rom. iii. 2.
[x] John i. 14. [y] xiv. 6. [z] i. 18.

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opened to us all his secrets concerning our salvation, and thereby declared that he is no less than the wisdom of God. When he appeared in the world, then *wisdom built herself an house*[a], as Solomon speaks; which words Athanasius not unfitly accommodates to our Lord Christ, "whose body is the house of wisdom[b]." And a most holy house, the dwelling-place of God; from whence he hath revealed himself not to so few as one nation, but to all the world; whom, if they would open their eyes, he hath illuminated with his wisdom.

R. Bechai, I remember, will have the ark from whence Moses heard God speaking to him to be called in their language by the name of אֲרוֹן, from אוֹר; as much as to say, 'because of the light which was there.' Which he will have to be the law (preserved in the ark), which was the light of Israel. And just thus writes St. John concerning this Word of God; *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*[c]. *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*[d]. For so Jesus proclaimed himself, saying, *I am the Light of the world*[e]. And such a Light he was, that all the wisdom which was discovered before from the sanctuary of God was but clouds and darkness in compare with that which was made manifest by our Saviour. The best knowledge they had was covered and wrapped up in types and figures, till God appeared in Jesus, and rent those clouds in pieces by the brightness of his beams. They had but such a confused apprehension of things in former times, that St. Paul compares this discovery of God in Christ to the breaking forth of light out of the rude chaos in the beginning of the world: *For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness*[f], *hath shined in our hearts* (the hearts of the apostles), *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*[g]. Some flashes of which light and majesty of God in him came from his face, not long after he entered into the world. When he was but a child they wondered at his wisdom, and *were astonished at his understanding and answers*[h]. But when he was grown up, and the Holy Ghost came down from heaven upon him, like the glory of the Lord which filled the taber-

[a] Prov. ix. 1.
[b] Orat. 3. contra Arian. [§. 52. tom. i. p. 601.]
[c] John i. 4.
[d] Ver. 9.
[e] viii. 12.
[f] Gen. i. 2, 3.
[g] 2 Cor. iv. 6.
[h] Luke ii. 47.

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nacle and temple, then his wisdom appeared the more illustriously, and was the more amazing, because they knew he was not trained up in the schools of learning, nor had any better breeding than a carpenter's shop could give him. For so his countrymen say: *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? How comes he by these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him*[i]*?* They were astonished at his doctrine; and, as St. Luke tells us, *wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth*[j]. For besides the divinity of the matter which he spake, and the mighty works which accompanied it, there was a certain majesty in the manner of its delivery: for *he taught as one having authority*[k]; that is, as one who had power to enact and ordain new laws (and those much superior to the old), and not only to explain those which were already written. He plainly also discovered a power to reward the faithful and to punish the disobedient; which was so astonishing, that in the judgment even of those who were sent to apprehend him, *never man spake like unto him*[l]. He opened to them the kingdom of heaven; he revealed to them immortal life; he gave them *manna*, of which if a man did eat, he assured them he should never die; and he promised (which is the thing they chiefly refer to in that speech) that *whosoever believed in him, out of his belly should flow rivers of living water; which he spake concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on him should receive*[m]. When this promise was fulfilled, then that which Moses did but wish for was actually done, *all the Lord's people became prophets*[n]. He made the gifts of prophecy and wisdom and knowledge as common as ordinary discourse was before; which showed that indeed God dwelt in him, else he could not have had all this wisdom, much less communicated so much to others.

II. But it will not be fit to prosecute these things too largely; therefore let us pass to the consideration of the mighty power of God manifested from the place where he was said to dwell, which was an evidence that he was there. And this you shall see appeared no less in our Saviour, as a token that God dwelt in him, and that he was become his temple. All their help you know of old is said to come from the sanctuary, where God

[i] Mark vi. 2, 3. [j] Luke iv. 22. [k] Matt. vii. 29.
[l] John vii. 46. [m] Ver. 38, 39. [n] [Num. xi. 29.]

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inhabited; and he is said to *strengthen them out of Sion*[n]. Thence the ark, upon the cover of which the Divine glory sat, is called *the ark of his strength*[o]: nay, it is often called simply by the name of *his strength; He delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand*[p]: and, *Seek the Lord and his strength*[q]; that is, the Lord before the ark of his presence, from whence their help and succour came: for whither this went, God was said to go along with them to deliver them; as the Philistines themselves had learnt, who, hearing the Israelites had brought the ark into the field, began to be afraid, and said, *God is come into the camp. Wo be to us: for there hath not been such a thing heretofore*[r]: that is, we fought with men hitherto, now with God. And this is the meaning of those words, *Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us*[s]. Those three tribes marching immediately after the ark (for their quarter was on the west of the tabernacle, in which part was the most holy place, and the ark in it[t]), it is as much as if he had said, Make thyself sensibly present now to thy people; manifest thy favour towards them from thy mercy seat; show that thou art among us, and give us a sign and token of thy presence and power, by overcoming and treading down our enemies.

Now, as then he gave proof that he dwelt there, by those acts of power and might; so he made it manifest, by all the wonderful things which Jesus did, that he was the Sanctuary wherein he dwelt among men. From him there were such emanations of power as never flowed from the ark itself. He stirred up his strength indeed (that I may borrow the ancient language) when Jesus appeared, and came and saved them in a diviner manner. Whensoever he healed any desperate disease, it was an act of salvation and deliverance, which told them there was a gracious presence of God among them: when he cast out a devil, it was the vanquishing of a dreadful enemy; and when he threw out a whole legion, it was a glorious victory over a more powerful army than ever the Israelites, by the *strength* of God among them, had overcome. To say nothing of his commanding the winds and the boisterous waves, which

[n] Ps. xx. 2. [o] cxxxii. 8. [p] lxxviii. 61. [q] cv. 4.
[r] 1 Sam. iv. 7, 8. [s] Ps. lxxx. 2. [t] Numb. ii. 17, 18, &c.

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as readily obeyed him, as the *Red sea fled when Judah was God's sanctuary* (the Divine presence not having settled itself then among them in any certain place), and *Jordan was driven back*[u] before the ark of his strength. By these acts it plainly appeared that all things were under his authority; not only men and other creatures here below, but also angels, principalities, and powers; over whom he as easily triumphed, as the Israelites had heretofore done by the power of God among them over the Philistines, or such like adversaries. Nay, he gave his apostles such a power over them, that they were ready to triumph too much in these conquests. He is fain to repress the joy wherewith they were transported, and to bid them not rejoice so much that the devils were made subject to them, as that they themselves were become the subjects of his kingdom, and their *names written in heaven*[x]. And so eminent was this manifestation of the Divine power in him, that he did but speak a word, and any thing was done that he required; insomuch that the people were amazed to hear him only say to a devil, *Come out*, and instantly he left the man, and hurt him not. *What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out*[y]. And upon another occasion of the like nature you read the same again, that *they were all amazed at the mighty power of God*[z]; and acknowledged with just admiration at such another sight, that *it was never so seen in Israel*[a]. Among all the marvellous works of former times, even those done by Moses himself, when the Divine glory visibly appeared on several occasions to them, there never was any thing like to that which our Saviour now wrought; so quickly, without so much as the pains of a bare touch, by his word only, and in all sorts of diseases, none excepted. For at his first entrance upon his office, after he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, he healed *all manner of sickness and all manner of disease*, throughout the whole region of Galilee and the adjoining countries[b].

III. Nor was the kindness and good-will of God to them more plainly manifested from the tabernacle and temple, than it is to us more abundantly declared in Jesus Christ. The ark,

[u] Ps. cxiv. 2, 3. [x] Luke x. 20. [y] iv. 36. [z] ix. 43. [a] Matt. ix. 33. [b] iv. 23, 24, 25.

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the place of God's presence, is called the *Testimony*[c]; for this reason as well as others, because it was a token of God's great love to them and care over them, testifying that he dwelt among them: and out of *Sion*, where the house of his glory and the ark of his presence was, he is said *to bless his people*[d], and to give them the *blessing of life*[e]; which may be more truly said of Jesus Christ, from whom now *the Lord hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore*[f]. In him he showed himself most propitious to mankind, and set him forth as his ἱλαστήριον, or *mercy seat*[g]; from whence he will dispense his divine favours towards us. We need not doubt of it, for he is the μαρτύριον, or *testimony* also, in the most proper seasons, of the greatest love and kindness that ever was[h]. This he testified indeed most of all by his death and giving himself *a ransom for us*, (which the apostle is there speaking of, and which Polycarp calls, in his Epistle to the Philippians, μαρτύριον τοῦ σταυροῦ[i], 'the testimony of the cross.') But it was apparent likewise by all the actions of his life; which testified how *full* he was *of grace* as well as of *truth*; for *he went about doing good*[j]. The very name that Philo gives the tabernacle, which he calls φορητὸν ἱερὸν[k], exactly belongs to him, who was a movable temple, a walking mercy seat, an holy place which went about, and carried God's blessings to all that drew nigh unto him. All the power he had was used, not to the harm of any man living, but to the benefit, relief, and comfort of every one that came to him. Whom did he ever refuse that intreated his help? What suitor did he turn away that came to beg his charitable assistance? He never excused himself, either from the multitude of business, or the distance of the place, or the greatness of the thing they asked, or the many courtesies he had done to them already, or upon any other account whatsoever; but willingly went to do them service; or, which is more, sent his divine influences afar off, to testify his omnipresent power for the rescuing of such as were at the point of death. And as for his doctrine, you remember it was so sweetly persuasive, that all the people *wondered at the words of grace*

[c] Exod. xvi. 34.
[d] Ps. cxxxiv. 3. cxxxiii. 3.
[e] Acts iii. 26; John xi. 25, 26.
[f] Rom. iii. 25.
[g] 1 Tim. ii. 6.
[h] [Cap. 7. Coteler. Patr. Apost. tom. ii. p. 188; Jacobson. Patr. Apost. tom. ii. p. 500.]
[i] Acts x. 38.
[j] Lib. 3. de Vita Mosis. [tom. ii. p. 146.]

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which proceeded out of his mouth[k]. So full of mercy it was, that he published a jubilee (as you there read[l]) to the miserable world; so rich in love, that St. John could do no less than say, that *in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*[m].

IV. And as the sanctuary was a place separate from all others for this purpose, that God might dwell in it, and from thence send them the tokens of his powerful love; even so was Jesus also separated after a special manner to be the tabernacle of God among men. The place where the divine glory made its residence was called the *most holy;* and the hill on which it stood is called *the mountain of his holiness*[n]; and the ark, which was the peculiar seat of God in the most holy place, is called *the throne of his holiness*[o], and the *holy ark*[p]. Nay, it is called by the name of *holiness*[q], as all the Hebrews interpret the place; and with great reason, for that which in one place is called *the holiness*[r] is in another, where the same thing is described, called *the ark*[s].

The ground of all which was, that these were separated by God's special command for his uses and service alone. And the tabernacle was built by peculiar directions which he himself gave, and by a divine art and skill, wherewith the workmen were inspired, and no other. And just thus was the temple of our Saviour's body likewise set apart and separated from all common flesh, to be the dwelling-place of God. Man had no hand in the making of it; but it was formed in the womb of a pure virgin by the power of the Holy Ghost. Upon which score the angel calls him, before he was conceived, τὸ Ἅγιον, *that holy thing* we render it[t] (but it is the very name of the temple), which had not an original like other men, being made by God alone. Nor did the good angels only acknowledge this, but the evil also call him *the Holy One of God*[v]. For he was again separated from all other by a voice from heaven, and by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and by many other things not now to be mentioned, which declared him to be the *most Holy*, or *Holy of holies*, spoken of by Daniel the

[k] Luke iv. 22. [l] Ver. 18. [m] 1 John iv. 9. [n] Ps. xlviii. 1. [o] xlvii. 8. [p] 2 Chron. xxxv. 3. [q] Numb. iv. 20. [r] 1 Kings viii. 8. [s] 2 Chron. v. 9. [t] Luke i. 35. [v] Mark i. 24.

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prophet[u], which Aben-Ezra expounds to be meant of Christ. And the unspotted holiness that was both in his doctrine and in his life (as you shall hear afterward), and the innocency and purity likewise of his followers and attendants, were no small testimony, added to the rest, that God was in him. *For he did no sin,* as St. Peter speaks, *neither was guile found in his mouth.* And all they that *came to him, as unto a living stone,* or temple, *rejected indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, καὶ αὐτοὶ, even they themselves became living stones, a spiritual house,* or temple, *an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*[x]. But it would be too long to note all that the holy Scriptures speak of this. Therefore,

V. Let us briefly observe how the omniscience of God which appeared in our Saviour declared that he dwelt in him, as the punctual prediction of many things formerly declared his presence at the tabernacle. There Moses, you know, made his inquiries upon all occasions: and from thence in after-ages God gave them answers concerning things unknown, when the high priest stood before the most holy place with the *urim* and *thummim* on his breast. And therefore, that the world might see God had changed his seat, and now dwelt here in his *holy child Jesus,* he declared things secret; and not only foretold a number of things both concerning himself and others, but manifested that he knew even the thoughts and purposes of men's hearts[y], and understood what was done at a distance from him[z]. Which was so demonstrative a proof to the true Israelite of the presence of God in him, that immediately he cries out, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.*

But the manner of his knowing what was in man and all other things was the most admirable. For whereas Moses was fain still to repair to one place, and inquire at the mercy seat before he could tell the mind of God; and could not so much as resolve a difficult case about the observation of a law, till he went to hear what the Lord would command concerning the persons who were in doubt[a]: our Lord had no need at all to

[u] Dan. ix. 24. [x] 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. [y] John iii. 23, 24.
[z] John i. 47, 48. [a] Numb. ix. 8.

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go any whither to make such inquiries; but in every place, even in Samaria, knew the greatest secrets[b]; for he himself was the tabernacle of God. He was the tent which God had pitched among men: separated unto him, as the tabernacle and temple were, by the visible descent of the divine glory upon him, and by its residing in him. So that wheresoever he was, he had an oracle continually within himself; and, without any addresses to the most holy place, or any other, knew all things, and revealed the mind of God to men. And all this was so conspicuous, that it was far better known than the presence of the Lord upon the ark. For that was confined to one place, whereas *Jesus went about doing good.* Which may be the meaning of that famous prophecy, Jer. iii. 16, 17, where he says, *they should not make mention of the ark any more*, that is, worship God before that as the only place, but *Jerusalem should be the throne of the Lord*, to which all nations should be gathered: that is, in every part of the city (and country too) he would appear as gloriously as he had done formerly in the most holy place of the temple, which could be at no other time but when Jesus appeared among them, and sent (by his apostles) *the law out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*, to all nations[c]. The throne of the Lord, I have told you already, is in their language, as Maimonides teaches us, 'every place which God separates for the manifestation of his divine glory." So the heaven is called *his throne*[d]; and by that name Jeremiah calls their sanctuary[e]: *A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.* And so I told you the ark is called; because that was the peculiar place in the sanctuary where he resided. But at last you see all Jerusalem (by which we may understand the whole nation) was to become the *throne of the Lord.* As it did when Jesus appeared (who in person was sent to that nation alone) in whom the divine glory shone illustriously in all places wheresoever he came. They beheld the wisdom, the power, the love of God in him: not only in the temple, where he oft appeared, but in every part of the holy city. In the streets, nay in the highways, in the fields, in the wilderness, upon the sea, there was a most glorious appearance of God;

[b] John iv. 18, 19. [c] Isa. ii. 3, 4. [d] lxvi. 1. [e] Jer. xvii. 12.

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such as never was when the ark alone was the *throne of the Lord.*

VI. Which puts me in mind, and then I shall end this, that the unity of God is as much, nay more, discovered in our blessed Saviour, as it was at the tabernacle or temple in former times. As there was but one place where God put his name among the children of Israel, and they were all to go to the very same oracle, whereby they were preserved in the belief and worship of one God; so now God hath manifested that this is his only begotten Son, and that there is no name given under heaven whereby we can be saved, but only his; and that we must seek to no other Mediator but this one, in whom now God appears in such a glory as he never did any where else. And this is also to keep us in the belief that God is one; which may hence also appear by this *manifestation of God in the flesh.* For whereas we call God by several attributes, the most holy, the most wise, the most powerful, and the like; yet we see all these were in one person, Christ Jesus. Which may well instruct us, that they altogether are but one God, and that it is one eternal Majesty who is so holy, wise, powerful and good.

But, as I said, this was better made known by our Saviour than by the divine majesty residing at the temple. For during all the time that the holy oracle of God stood at Jerusalem, there were also oracles which pretended gods maintained among the Gentiles. This upheld the opinion concerning a multitude of gods: and all that Moses or the prophets could do did not destroy this belief in the world; no, not root it out of Israel, till God appeared in our Lord and Saviour. Then these other oracles grew mute; and it was held ridiculous to believe any more gods than one. The devils lost all their power, *μετὰ τὴν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν παρόδου,* 'after the coming of our Saviour among men.' They are the words of Eusebius, who produces a sworn enemy of Christianity to avouch what he delivers, Porphyry by name, who makes this ingenuous confession[f], that *Ἰησοῦ τιμωμένου,* &c. "ever since Jesus was honoured, none ever received any public help and succour from the gods. Æsculapius and the rest of the gods have withdrawn themselves from men, and do not converse with them." From whence

[f] Lib. v. Præpar. cap. 1. [p. 179 D.]

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Eusebius argues very rationally on this manner. "How came you to know those whom you worship to be gods? Why did not Æsculapius and the rest of his companions overthrow the power of Jesus, and make it of none effect? If he be a mortal man, as you say, (nay, perhaps you call him a juggler and a deceiver,) and they indeed be saviours and gods, what is the matter that they flee before him, and turn their backs of one that is so inconsiderable? Why do they yield up all the world to his power, and abandon all their subjects in this shameful manner? If you have any sense, you must conclude that he is stronger than they, and that what he speaks is true. For though he be but one, and, as one would suppose, alone, yet he hath driven away a vast number of gods, and made them leave the world. He hath abolished their worship and service, and exposed them to such contempt, that as they appear no longer gods, so they can do just nothing. They are not able so much as to show themselves, as they were wont, to their followers, but plainly discover that they were demons, not gods."

But on the contrary, the worship of this Jesus, and that one God, who, he saith, sent him into the world, is every day more and more propagated, and takes deeper root in the minds of all people. One would have thought that these gods should have bestirred themselves at his coming more than ever. They should have made combinations, and joined all their forces against him. Their oracles which were so famous should now, above all other times, have been frequented, and spoken most loudly, so that all the world might hear them, against this person, who came to destroy that religion, and take away all that reverence which was paid them. Or if one oracle had been dumb upon any particular cause, yet all of them together, one would think, should not have lost their voice and their credit in this fashion. These gods should have had more care of their reputation and authority than to let this single person, whom they pretended also to be so mean, to prevail thus mightily against them. For, as Plutarch tells us[ε], in those very places where there was in times past μεγάλη δόξα θεότητος, 'a great glory of the divinity,' there was nothing to do in his days, but all was vanished. A sign that indeed God was more in our Saviour than he ever had been in any other person or place; and that

ε [De Orac. defect. tom. ii. p. 411 E.]

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he was nowhere else, and that he would be worshipped only in that way which he taught and prescribed. For they saw his *glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son*[g], who had those marks of a divine Majesty residing in him that none ever had, and from whom we may expect all that the wisdom, power and love of God can do for us.

What should we do then, but, after such evident proofs that God is in him, fall down, and with the most humble and joyful reverence worship him, who, as it there follows, is *full of grace and truth?* Because he is full of truth, we ought to resign and submit ourselves to his government; and because he is full of grace, we should always rejoice to think that we are under his care, and we should put our trust under the shadow of his wings. And that he is so full of both, that we may with great satisfaction commit ourselves to his guidance, confide and rejoice in him, will appear still more evidently by the next testimony, which he received from the Holy Ghost.

II.

Which was upon the day of Pentecost, ten days after he left this world; when it gave a more public testimony to him than it had done at his baptism, that he was the Son of God, exalted to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high. For his apostles being then assembled together in one place, on a sudden there came such a mighty inspiration from him, who a little before he parted with them *breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost;* that the sound of it was like that of a violent blast of wind when it is a coming. Which was anciently a token of a divine presence approaching[h], and now was a sign that by the power of this Spirit they should carry all before them. For it filled *all the house* where they were sitting, as they did all the world, ere long, by their preaching. And immediately a glimpse of that divine majesty or glory appeared on them, which came down upon our Saviour at his baptism, and ever after dwelt in him; who now sent the apostles, just as the Father had sent him. For a bright flame was seen upon their heads, and they *were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

So St. Luke reports: that *there appeared unto them cloven*

[g] John i. 14. [h] Gen. iii. 8.

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tongues, like as of fire; and *it sat upon each of them*[i]: a sign that this power should abide with them alway, and accompany them every where; though this visible flame vanished. The effect of which was notorious to all, even as it was apparent that Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost, though none but John Baptist saw it coming down upon him: for *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues:* of which all Jerusalem (as it there follows), yea men of all nations, were witnesses; who heard them speak in their own tongues *the wonderful works of God*[k]. They proclaimed, that is, to all the people whom the report of this strange news had brought together, what wonders God had wrought by Jesus, and what he had now done for him; having *raised him from the dead*[l], and *exalted him by his right hand*[m], *and made him both Lord and Christ*[n]: that is, he was now, they might see if they would not shut their eyes, enthroned by God in the heavens, and completely invested with that royal power, of which he had received some portion before; being now made LORD of all things, and the KING of God's people. Of which *we*, say the apostles, *are his witnesses*, (who saw him after he rose again, and beheld him ascend into heaven;) *and so is the Holy Ghost*[o], which he sent from thence, as they all now saw and heard in divers sensible effects, which testified that he was at the right hand of God.

And here it will be fit to observe three things:

First: That the HOLY GHOST was his WITNESS, (as the apostles, you see, call him), as the coming of it was the fulfilling of what he had predicted and promised a little before his *going away* from them. At the very mention of that word, they were very disconsolate; and *sorrow filled their heart.* Whereupon he cheers them up with this assurance, that he would not leave them comfortless, like so many fatherless children, but *pray the Father, and he would give them another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever*[p]; and never go away from them, as he was about to do. This he tells them was the *Spirit of truth*[q], *whom the Father would send in his name*[r]; where he repeats this over again, and tells them what the Holy Ghost would do for them. And therefore charges

[i] Acts ii. 3, 4. [k] Ver. 11. [l] Ver. 24. [m] Ver. 33. [n] Ver. 36. [o] Ver. 32. [p] John xiv. 16. [q] Ver. 17. [r] Ver. 26.

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them not to be troubled or afraid, but rather rejoice to hear him say he was going to the Father, *who was greater than he;* and therefore would give him power, when he went to him, to do more for them than he could do now[r]. And then he adds the reason why he said all this: *Now I have told you before it come to pass; that, when it is come to pass, you might believe*[s]: that is, be confirmed in the belief of all that I have said, and fully persuaded I have not boasted of a power and authority which doth not belong to me. They might well be confident of it themselves, and bid *all the house of Israel know assuredly that God had made the same Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ;* when they saw this come to pass, which he had foretold and promised so often, before his death[t],—after his resurrection[u],—just before his ascension[x]; where he bids them not stir from Jerusalem, but *wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of him,* and which would give them power to be his witnesses every where.

It was an evident argument, when they received it, of these two divine properties in him, *foreknowledge* and *omnipotence.* They had reason to believe there was a divine majesty in him, when he was with them on earth; and to trust to all he had said either of himself or them, or those that should believe on his name; and to look upon him now as the King of glory, with all power in heaven and earth. For how could he have taken the boldness to foretel and promise such a thing as this from God the Father, what hope had he to make it good, if he had not been sure that *the Father and he were one* (as he speaks[y]), and that what he said was by his authority, who would justify his word? Nothing could have been more vain, or done him greater discredit after all the glory he had got, than to give this as a sign of his truth; if he himself had not been sure that *God had given all things into his hand, and that he came out from God, and was going unto God,* as it is John xiii. 3. And what greater argument could there be that he did not assume a dignity or title which he had no right unto, than the verifying his word in so hard and difficult a case as this, even then when his enemies thought he could do nothing because he was dead and buried? This must needs

[r] Ver. 28. [s] Ver. 29. [t] John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 7. [u] Luke xxiv. 49. [x] Acts i. 4, 8. [y] John xiv. 20.

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make the apostles as sure as he was, (for his confident belief could not work belief in them;) and therefore he did fulfil his promise and endued them with such power from on high, that in a moment he brought all things which he had taught them to their remembrance, enabled them to speak with all manner of tongues, to make a man whole with speaking a word, nay, to raise the dead, and to give the Holy Ghost likewise to others who believed their word.

How came he by this power, if indeed he was not the Lord of all? Why did not his word die with himself and fall to the ground, if he usurped upon the prerogative of God, and laid claim to a glory which was none of his? How could it come into any man's mind, let me ask again, to promise such a thing as this, if he did not know what he could do? and could any man do such a thing, if he were not more than a man; even the King of infinite power at the right hand of God? So the apostles could not but conclude when they felt the effects of his royal power in their own hearts; and when they could make others feel them, by innumerable benefits which they bestowed, both on their souls and bodies. To be able to do such things on earth as he had done showed plainly what he was; but to be able to make others do more wonderful things, when he had left the world, was still a more convincing argument that all things were put in subjection under his feet. Nothing now was more evident to them than this great truth; whatsoever distrust of it they might have before. With this mighty inspiration all their doubts were blown away, like the dust before the wind. This fire which appeared on their heads purged their souls quite from all the relics of infidelity, if there were any remaining. They could do nothing now but speak the praises of Jesus, and proclaim him with these tongues to all the world to be the Lord; with a zeal as hot as fire.

The people indeed, it may be said, did not hear him foretel this glorious day, and make any such promise of the Holy Ghost, and therefore how could it convince them? I answer, it is confessed that he did not speak of this so plainly to them as he did to the apostles; and therefore I have not alleged it all this time for that purpose: but only to show that they to whom he so often gave hopes of the coming of the Holy Ghost upon

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them had reason to rely upon its testimony when it came; even upon this account, that it was the performance of his gracious promise to them. There are many proofs which we produce seem to carry less force in them than really they have, when careless minds stretch them too far, to prove more than was intended. The Jews were to be convinced by it upon another score, not by the fulfilling of his particular promises to the apostles; which could work no further upon the people than they believed their testimony who came with such power from Jesus to them. But I must add also, that our Saviour had said something of this to all the people at a public feast[a]. And when he was arraigned he openly declared to the high priest and the whole senate, that they should presently receive sensible tokens of his majesty, which now they so affronted. For when they adjured him to tell them whether he was *the Christ the Son of God*[b], though he knew they would neither believe him if he told them, nor give him a good reason if he argued with them, why they did not believe[c], yet he told them in express terms that he was[d]. And then adds these remarkable words: *Nevertheless, I say unto you,* (i. e. though now you do not believe what I have told you, yet mind what I say,) *hereafter* (from this moment, *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν*, or very few days hence) *you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power*[e]. Which can refer to nothing but the mission of the Holy Ghost, which presently ensued, and was a certain argument that he was at God's right hand[f]. When this came they could not but *see,* unless they would be wilfully blind, that he was possessed of the kingdom he had so much spoken of. It was an irrefragable testimony that he was the Son of the Blessed, and could the less be gainsaid, because he told them beforehand they should *see* what they would not then *believe;* that is, have a manifest demonstration of his glorious majesty in the heavens. Which if it would not move them, nothing remained but to *see him,* after another fashion, *coming in the clouds of heaven,* as it there follows: to destroy, that is, such incredulous wretches, who killed their King, and persisted so obstinately in their rebellion, that they *resisted the Holy*

[a] John vii. 38, 39. [b] Matt. xxvi. 63. [c] Luke xxii. 67, 68.
[d] Ver. 64. [e] Luke xxii. 69. [f] Acts ii. 33.

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Ghost, whom he sent to convince them of their crime, and convert them to his obedience. So it is interpreted, Luke xxii. 27, 31.

II. For the power of it was so great, that setting aside this consideration, if he had said nothing at all to them or his apostles of his sending the Holy Ghost; yet its coming in this manner was an evident testimony both to them and all others that he made a just claim to be their King. He could not else have scattered such royal gifts so bountifully among them, as the manner of emperors was in their triumphs, and of kings at their coronation. This showed that indeed he had the power, which the Jews denied him: it vindicated his rights, which they would have taken from him: it made it appear he was what he pretended; and that not he, but they were the guilty persons, who had condemned him for saying he was the *Son of God*. This was the very end of its coming, as our Saviour also told his apostles a little before his death [g], where he saith, that if he went away he would send the *Paraclete*, that is, his Advocate, unto them, whose office it should be to *convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*. Of this place I shall be able, I hope, to give a full account hereafter, together with all those that relate to the Holy Ghost; and therefore I shall say no more of it now than this: that the end of the *Paraclete's* coming was to plead the cause of our Saviour; to maintain his innocence; and to prove against all accusers, that though he was condemned by men, yet he was acquitted by God, and had said nothing but the truth.

For observe but the crime whereof he was accused, and for which he was sentenced by the Jews, and you will soon see that nothing could clear him so much as this. The great thing they laid to his charge, as you have heard already, was that he affirmed, when they adjured him to speak his thought, that he was *the Christ, the Son of the Blessed*. This was the blasphemy which they pretended wounded their hearts with grief when they heard of it, and for which they adjudged him to be worthy of death. Now what could demonstrate the vileness of this calumny, and prove him not guilty, more than such a power possessing his followers even after he was dead, as they

[g] John xiv. 7–9.

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saw in himself when he was alive? Nay, a far greater, which declared, as they truly said, that he was *Lord of all*[h]? He could not have done such things as they beheld were wrought at the invoking of his name, if he were not truly the *Son of God*. The apostles might have called long enough upon him before they had made a man, lame from his mother's womb, walk up and down and leap and praise God; if he, whom they crucified, were not exalted by God's right hand to be a *Prince and a Saviour*. And it had been the vainest thing of all for the apostles to go and preach up the authority of a dead man, and who was ignominiously crucified as a great malefactor, if they had not known that the *Holy Ghost* from him was ready at hand in every place and time to be his *Advocate*, and take his part against all gainsayers.

This heavenly *Witness* never failed to appear when there was need of him to justify our Saviour, and to set all things right in the opinion of the world; by reversing their false judgment, and by establishing and verifying the sentence he had passed on himself, when he said that he was the *Son of God*. The tables were now turned by the appearance of this *Paraclete*, who pleaded so strongly and convincingly, that many who had before accounted him an evil-doer were now forced to alter their mind, and confess him to be a righteous person. They who had reviled him, now gave him worship and honour: they that cried, *Crucify him*, said as the centurion, when they heard the *Holy Ghost* speak on his behalf, *Sure this was the Son of God*. And all those who were so hardy as to *resist the Holy Ghost*[i], were fain to oppose it with rage and throwing stones; for in any other manner they were not able *to resist the wisdom and the Spirit*, whereby St. Stephen (a man *full of the Holy Ghost*) spake to them and reasoned with them[k].

So great a testimony was this of the *Holy Ghost* to Jesus, that the apostles were not fit to be his *witnesses* till they had received it[l]. But after it came upon them and joined its testimony with theirs, then they defended his cause so successfully, that *a great company of the priests*, the greatest enemies to it, yielded themselves, and became *obedient to the faith*[m].

[h] Acts x. 36. [i] vii. 51. [k] vi. 9, 10. [l] Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8. [m] Acts iv. 7.

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Then if any one asked, How dare you contradict the sentence of the high court, to which all men are bound upon pain of death to submit[n]? what can you say to justify this presumption in maintaining his righteousness whom the grand council of the nation had condemned to suffer death? They could soon make this reply, Let the *Holy Ghost* answer you; hear what he says to you: if he do not speak enough for us and for Jesus to satisfy you, then we refuse not to die; you may deal with us as the despisers of God and his law. And so mightily were they astonished and perplexed by the pleadings of the *Holy Ghost*, that the Sanhedrim (the supreme court of judicature among them) knew not what to say to the apostles, nor what to do with them. They only clapped them in prison for preaching Jesus[o], and threatened farther severity if they did not desist[p]; but they durst not proceed to pass the sentence of death upon them according as the law directed, the people glorifying God so heartily for what they saw them do by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nay, so much were some of this great council staggered, that according to the persuasion of Gamaliel, a great master among them, they let the apostles go free, after a second imprisonment, lest *perhaps they should be found fighters against God*[q]. If this be an human project, says that wise man, do not trouble yourselves about it, for it will come to nought, as the vain attempts of others have done, who at the first drew much people after them. But if these men prove to be authorized by God, and he will have it so, who can overthrow it? We had best take heed how we proceed in a business wherein we may chance to have God against us. It is better, in my judgment, to be quiet, and see what the issue will be, lest, instead of contending with men, we be found to oppose God Almighty himself.

III. And the issue was this (which is the last thing), that by the power of this *Advocate* alone, and no other, our Lord Jesus actually obtained a kingdom in spite of all the opposition that could be made against him. This was the greatest testimony of the *Holy Ghost* to him, which effectually proved him to be a King, by winning him a kingdom, and persuading men to submit unto him, though he was invisible, and not like to

[n] Deut. xvii. 9, 12. [o] Acts iv. 3. [p] Ver. 21. [q] Ver. 39.

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reward their services in this world at all, but only in another. It proclaimed him all abroad in the world to be the Lord of life and glory, and by the mere *preaching of the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,* (as St. Peter speaks[r],) the nations were subdued to him, and acknowledged him for their Sovereign.

The high priest and council of Jerusalem, as it there follows in Acts v. 40, desiring to discourage the apostles in this preaching, ordered them to be beaten, and then commanded them to speak no more in the name of Jesus for fear of a worse punishment that might follow. Alas! vain men, that thought to choke this truth, and bury this report concerning Jesus! Did they think it was in their power to murder his name as they had done him? and by such means as these prevent his faith from spreading itself any further? They were mightily mistaken in the courage of these *twelve men,* who *rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name:* and as *unlearned* and *ignorant* as they found them[s], not only persuaded many in that country to believe Jesus to be the Lord, but carried the same of him to all nations: for they received another kind of *mandate* from him, which they were resolved to obey; nothing doubting but the power of the Holy Ghost would go along with them to prosper their attempt. The Jewish rulers said, *Speak not at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus*[t]*:* but Jesus their Master had said, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*[u]*:* or, as it is in St. Matthew, *Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*[x]. They durst not therefore but go, especially when the power of the Holy Ghost came down upon them on purpose that they might be able to speak in his name, and win him subjects in all the world, by proving that he was perfectly *Lord and Christ.* And so you read in St. Luke[y]: *It behoved Christ to die and rise again, that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. And ye are witnesses of these things.*

[r] 1 Pet. i. 12. [s] Acts iv. 13. [t] Ver. 18. [u] Mark xvi. 15.
[x] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. [y] Luke xxiv. 47—49.

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And, behold, I send you the promise of my Father: but tarry ye at Jerusalem (that is, before you go about this business) *until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Now here do but consider with me these three things: first, the vastness of this design; secondly, the poorness of the means; and thirdly, the weakness and inaptitude of the instruments which were to be employed by him; and you will soon see what service the Holy Ghost did him, without whose power he would never have attempted such things, or never have achieved them. They are all in that place now mentioned, *Go and teach all nations*[z], &c. See here what a compass he takes for his kingdom, no less than all the world; wherein he intends to settle new laws, and advance a government proper to himself, established upon a doctrine not at all taking with flesh and blood. Who is there that ever went about any such thing, or had such a thought in his mind? not only to conquer, but to change the religion of all the world, and abolish those laws and customs which had stood for many ages? What arms or ammunition did he provide them withal for this purpose? With what forces did he send them? or by what means did he hope to win kings and princes to resign their crowns to him, and submit themselves to his orders?

Behold here a new wonder, which is the second thing I now named: he bid them go and *preach*. How could any one fancy he should overcome nations with his breath? Could he take words to have such force in them, as to persuade whole countries that never saw him to become his subjects? What strange orators must these be, who could draw men of such different languages, natures, and inclinations in all the world after them? Where were they bred, to learn such powerful rhetoric as should charm the hearts of all that heard them? From what school did they come, or by whom were they instructed in the art of catching souls? Alas! they were very illiterate and ignorant men, fishermen and such like rustic people, whom Christ called to be fishers for souls, and sent to draw hearts to him. And I remember Plato in his Phædrus[a], when he would express a block, a rude and unbred fellow, says

[z] Matth. xxviii. 19. [a] [p. 243 d.]

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he was ἐν ναύταις τεθραμμένος, 'bred up among mariners.' Very unlikely instruments these were for his purpose; if he had been to take counsel of philosophers, and intended to teach men by no stronger arguments than theirs. They were the most unfit men that could be chosen to be his ambassadors, if he had not been another kind of Lord and Master, and they had not gone with other kind of instructions than the world had known before.

And that is the third wonder, enough to astonish any considering man, that they who, as Eusebius notes, could scarce speak their own language well, but were mocked for Galileans, whose dialect was the most broad and ungentle of all the nation; that these, I say, should go to speak to all the nations of the world with hope to persuade them. Alas! they were not fit to be masters to so much as one single person, much less to teach a country school; how then could they undertake to teach the whole world? What king, what lawgiver, what philosopher, either Greek or barbarian, as the same Eusebius proceeds[a], ever dreamt of any such design as this? They held their labour well bestowed if they could establish their doctrine and laws in one city, or perhaps in one country, but never thought themselves able to spread them any farther. Whereas Jesus, οὐδὲν θνητὸν καὶ ἀνθρωπινὸν διανοηθείς, 'meditating nothing that was common to mortal men,' nothing that was merely human, says confidently to these contemptible men whom he had chosen to be his emissaries, *Go*, now that I bid you, *and teach all nations.*

But suppose the disciples should have said to him, as well they might, Though we are ready to do any thing for thy sake, yet how shall we accomplish this? How, for example, shall we speak to the Romans, of whose language we are ignorant? Or how shall we teach the Egyptians, and the Indians, and the Scythians, who have but one tongue which we learn of our mothers, and that but a rude one neither. We shall stand dumb before them and say nothing. They will take us for a company of fools, and we shall look like mere statues and images of men. Or if we could speak their languages, what hope have we to prevail with them? Who will be persuaded

[a] Lib. iii. Demonstr. Evang. [cap. 6. p. 135 D.]

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by such as we, to forsake the religion of their country, and to embrace thine who art a stranger to them? Truly this had been but a rational question, if our Saviour had not taken care to prevent it, by adding those words to his mandate, *Lo, I am with you alway to the end of the world.* He had said a little before, *All power in heaven and earth is given to me*[b]*: go therefore and teach all nations,* advance my authority and spread my kingdom, and do not doubt you shall effect the business; for I who have all power will be with you. And so he was, by the power of the Holy Ghost who was his Advocate; for he gave them presently after the gift of tongues; he accompanied them every where, if they did but mention his name, with signs and miracles; yea, the very shadow of some of them did more than all the power of medicines. This was a very great demonstration of his supreme dominion over all creatures. Nothing could be more effectual to induce men to obey him, to whom they saw every thing else was subject. Without this they could never have moved men to believe that he was the Lord, but this gave it sufficient credit.

For suppose they had stood up in the places of popular concourse, and said, "We come to preach to you in the name of Jesus, and require you to submit yourselves to him, whom God hath made the *Lord of all.* He was born of the seed of David, a great king in Israel, did many wonders in that nation, though he was hated and rejected by them, and delivered to Pontius Pilate, by whom he was crucified; but God raised him out of his grave, and we saw him go to heaven, where he is enthroned in the most glorious majesty, and reigns over all angels as well as mankind. Cast away therefore your ancient gods, who are his subjects. Forsake presently all your superstitious rites and ceremonies. Believe on this Person; submit to his government, and obey his commands. Though you get nothing in this world by it, but perhaps may lose all you have, he will reward you for it in his heavenly kingdom." What force do you think there would have been in such a speech, to persuade the nations far distant from Jerusalem to fall down before him as their sovereign? Would they not have smiled, and said, What do these babblers mean, to bring us these strange stories from a foreign land? Why should we acknow-

[b] Ver. 18.

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ledge him to be our king, whom his own countrymen would not suffer to reign over them? Shall we become the subjects of one whom we never saw nor heard of until now? and venture the loss of all our liberties, and perchance of our lives, for one whom they confess to be crucified and dead? What likelihood is there that he should rise again from the dead, who could not keep himself when he was alive from being put to death?

"Truly," saith Eusebius, "when I consider the mere doctrine they were to preach, I cannot see how they could hope to draw the people to their belief. But then, when I consider how they did prevail everywhere, at Rome, at Alexandria, at Antioch, in all other places, I must have recourse to a divine power, which succeeded this doctrine. Jesus plainly declared, by putting them upon the attempt, that he was confident he had all power to get himself a kingdom by this preaching. And by the issue it appeared that it was no presumption wherewith he was possessed, instead of a well-grounded confidence. They preached as he bade them, but it was not with such rhetoric as is in use among us; nor *with the enticing words of man's wisdom*, with eloquent expressions, enchanting language, or mere plausible arguments, but *in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power*[b]. The Holy Ghost from heaven presently appeared wheresoever they preached, to justify their words, and to testify by many miraculous operations that Jesus was no less than they affirmed. This evident demonstration persuaded men's minds. This was such a power, that the people were ready to take them for gods, and imagined that Mercury and Jupiter were come down from heaven to them, and thereupon prepared public sacrifices to be offered in their honour[c]. Natural reason told them that such things could not be done by mortal nature; but they must be concluded to be the works of some God, though nobody told them that they were. And therefore this was all they had to do for their own satisfaction; to inquire by what power and authority the apostles did these wonders, since they themselves confessed that they were but men. And here now they took occasion to let them know that it was Jesus who did these mi-

[b] 1 Cor. ii. 4. [c] Acts xiv. 13.

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racles. Him they preached, and him they hereby proved to be the Lord's anointed; who by this power would prevail, notwithstanding the fierce opposition that was made against his authority."

For, as you read in a devout address which the whole company of believers made to God, *the rulers were gathered together, and the kings of the earth stood up against the Lord, and against his Christ.* At their first entrance upon this work there were mighty endeavours to overthrow it, just as there had been against his *holy child Jesus*, whom he had *anointed*, that is, promoted to a greater glory than he had on earth. And therefore they desire God to go along with them, and *stretch forth his hand to heal; and that signs and wonders might be done by the name of his holy child Jesus*[d], for the propagating of this religion, which it was not in their own power to advance. Now this was a further testimony of the power and glory of Jesus, that when a solemn address was made to God, and they represented to him their design, they were so far from receiving any discountenance from him, that he encouraged and promoted this undertaking. For the place where they prayed was shaken, by a powerful inspiration which came upon them all, as it had done upon the apostles; *and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness*[e].

III.

And this leads me to the last testimony which the Holy Ghost gave to him, by descending upon other persons as well as upon the apostles; though not in such a visible form as it did on the day of Pentecost. The place indeed was *shaken* where these believers were assembled, by the like *mighty wind*, I suppose, as filled the house where the apostles received the Holy Ghost[f]. But there were no fiery tongues now appeared, as there did then: nor do we afterwards read of any such sensible sign of an invisible power coming upon them as this shaking of the place was, when the Holy Ghost first descended upon the body of the church; but whensoever the apostles laid their hands upon any person who believed in Jesus and was baptized, presently the Holy Ghost fell down upon them, and

[d] Acts iv. 26, 27, 30. [e] Ver. 31. [f] ii. 2.

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they *spake with tongues and prophesied*[g]. This laying on of their hands was ever after the only external sign of the divine power (for that is the meaning of *stretching out the hand* in the place just before named[h]), wherewith they should be endued at the request of the apostles: which was a plain demonstration of the royal majesty and munificence of Jesus, whose servants and ministers these were; and hereby the Holy Ghost bare record to him that he was the Son of God.

So this very apostle teaches us in the second chapter of this Epistle, where he tells them to whom he writes that he need not be very solicitous to prescribe them antidotes against those Antichristian doctrines which then began to poison the church, because they had *an unction from the Holy One, and knew all things*[i]: the Holy Ghost, that is, was their security from infection; which is here called the *unction* or *anointing*, 1. because by the coming down of this upon our Saviour, he was made the *Christ* or *anointed* of God[k]: and, 2. the apostles when they received it were made the principal officers in his kingdom, and endued with such a power to remit sins and unloose men from the punishment of them as he had[l]: and, 3. all others to whom they imparted this gift were openly declared *the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*[m]. This *unction* made them all *kings and priests unto God; and they reigned with him on earth*[n]; enjoyed, that is, many royal privileges and liberties at present, for which they were bound perpetually to praise him, beside the right it gave them to an heavenly kingdom, where they should *sit down with him in his throne, as he was in the throne of his Father*[o]. For the thrones of the eastern princes were wide and large, as I told you before, where others might sit down by them, if they pleased to admit any to that high honour, which this King of kings promises to grant to his faithful followers.

No wonder then that they who were designed to so great glory were also made partakers of the *earnest* of it, as this *unction* by the Holy Spirit is called[p]. After God had filled the apostles and other apostolical men with the Holy Ghost,

[g] Acts viii. 15, 17; xix. 6. [h] iv. 30. [i] 1 John ii. 20. [k] Acts x. 38. [l] John xx. 22, 23. [m] Rom. viii. 16, 17. [n] Rev. v. 10. [o] iii. 21. [p] 2 Cor. i. 22.

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who were ready to guide and direct all Christian people while they lived, there were great numbers also in the body of the church, who received so many of its gifts from the *Holy One* (that is, God[q]), that it enabled them to discern truth from falsehood, and discover all those cheats and impostures which some went about to put upon them under the name of Christian doctrine. A very great Doctor the Holy Ghost was, when they were anointed with it; for thereby they *knew all things*, that is, their whole religion, in which it made them so perfect, that those pretenders to new revelations could teach them nothing which they knew not already: for it taught them that Jesus, from whom it came, was the Son of God, and had revealed all God's will plainly and fully to them. So St. John tells them in the following verses: *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ*[r]*?* &c.: that is, I do not speak of this because you are ignorant of Christianity, but because you are well acquainted with it, and thereby able to judge when anybody contradicts it, and to reject all those as liars who deny Jesus to be anointed by God the Lord of all. I know you are well principled in this truth by the *unction* which he hath given you from the Father: all that I desire is (as he adds[s]), that you would suffer that truth, *which you have heard from the beginning, to abide in you.* And indeed it was very unreasonable to start from that which had ever been acknowledged since the Holy Ghost first descended on Jesus himself; and which the same *unction* still testified whensoever the apostles, who preached Jesus, did but lay their hands on anybody's head, and pray to Jesus that he would bestow it on them. They could not be seduced if they did but attend, as he says[t], to this *anointing which they had received, and which was yet among them.* There was no need of any other teacher but this to instruct them; which gave such an evident demonstration of the power and glory of the Lord Jesus, and was so far from being a lie, or deceiving them, that if they did but do it as it *taught* them, they must needs *abide in him.*

[q] 2 Cor. i. 21. [r] 1 John ii. 21. 22. [s] Ver. 24. [t] Ver. 26, 27.

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This you see was accounted, and that justly, an infallible witness to him. He could never have sent such an *unction*, nor would the Holy Ghost have ever come in his name, if he had not been the King of heaven. They that received this had an invincible proof of his glory and majesty within themselves. They could not doubt of it any more than they could of what they felt: which proved likewise so convincing to others, that it made unbelievers fall down on their faces and worship God, and *report that God was in them of a truth*[u]. For by this the Divine Majesty did in a proper sense *dwell* among Christian people, *and walk with them*[x], as it did among the ancient Israelites. This was a glorious divine presence in the church, whereby God and our Saviour *made their abode with them*[y]; and they became *the habitation of God* (or his dwelling-place) *through the Spirit*[z].

Which so constantly bare witness to him, that no man who had this Spirit could possibly deny him; but every one that spake by the Holy Ghost acknowledged *Jesus to be the Lord*[a]. And they were no small number who were made partakers of it. For St. Peter promises it, at the very first descent of it, to all that would *repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus;* at which word *three thousand souls were added to them*[b]; and afterwards a vast company more, as you may read in the first epistle to the Corinthians: where some were endued with one power of the Holy Ghost, some with another[c]; but *in every thing they were enriched by him, so that they came behind in no gift*[d]. Wherein our Lord far excelled Moses, who could not give his spirit unto others, much less unto the Gentiles; whereas Jesus sent great abundance of his Spirit, as you see, upon his disciples, and gave even to the Gentiles *the like gift as he did unto them*[e]. For as St. Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his friends, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,* to the great astonishment of the Jewish Christians, who wondered *to hear them speak with tongues and magnify God*[f]. But they should have considered that now he began to fulfil completely that prophecy of Joel (mentioned Acts ii. 17.), which promised that God would *pour out*

[u] 1 Cor. xiv. 25. [x] 2 Cor. vi. 16, [y] John xiv. 23. [z] Eph. ii. 22.
[a] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [b] Acts ii. 38, 41. [c] Chap. xii. [d] i. 5, 7.
[e] Acts xi. 17. [f] x. 44, 45, 46.

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of his Spirit upon all flesh. Now the inclosures were first broken down, and that Divine presence which had hitherto been confined to one nation appeared in a most amazing lustre to the rest of the world; insomuch that in a little time great multitudes of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, joined their hearts and voices with the heavenly quire, saying, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory*[g]. Thus Esaias heard the angels sing, *when he beheld our Saviour's glory, and spake of him*[h]. And the church of Christ from the beginning hath taken these words from their mouths, and made them their own[i], when they actually saw this *glory of the Lord* filling the earth with its most holy presence. For our Lord did not cease to pour out more and more of his Spirit on all flesh, even after the apostles were dead: but, as Justin Martyr tells the Jews in his time (which was above an hundred years after this), καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστιν ἰδεῖν καὶ θηλείας[k], &c. "one might have seen among Christians both women and men who had gifts from the Spirit of God." And so one might in the days of Origen[l] (who lived as many years after that), who, to convince Celsus that it was no fable which was reported of the descent of the Holy Ghost on our Saviour, affirms that ἔτι ἴχνη τοῦ ἁγίου ἐκείνου Πνεύματος, &c. "there were still remaining among them some footsteps of that Holy Spirit, which was seen in the form of a dove. For they dispossessed devils, performed many cures, and foresaw some things, according to the will and pleasure of the Word, concerning what was to come." Nay, it were easy to show that this heavenly power descended still much lower, and did not quite leave the world in these ages; and that it did not work in some obscure corners only, but in the most noted places in the world. For the same Justin says in his first Apology[m], that there were many healed by the name of Jesus Christ in the city of Rome, whom no other person could heal. So that look how many souls there were full of the Holy Ghost, so many lasting witnesses there were to our Saviour of his power and glory in every place.

[g] Is. vi. 3.
[h] John xii. 41.
[i] Rev. iv. 8.
[k] Dial. cum Tryph. [§. 88. p. 185 D.]
[l] Lib. 1. contra Cels. [§. 46. tom. i. p. 361 E.]
[m] [Al. Apol. ii. §. 6. p. 93 A.]

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But intending hereafter to treat of all these gifts of the Holy Ghost alone by themselves, I shall say no more of them now; having sufficiently shown how they were his testimony to our Saviour. It is possible, I confess, that there may be another thing included in the name of the Holy Ghost; and that is the old prophets, who received gifts from heaven, whereby they sometimes spake of the Messiah. So the Holy Ghost is said in Heb. x. 15. to be a *witness* of the perfection of our Saviour's oblation; and for a proof of it the testimony of the prophet Jeremiah is alleged, whose words are called the *witness of the Holy Ghost.* From whence I might take occasion to show that all the predictions of the prophets do so exactly agree to Jesus, and are so perfectly fulfilled in him, that we must needs grant him (if we receive this testimony of the Holy Ghost, and take them to have been inspired thereby) to be the Son of God, the King of Israel, who they had long put that nation in hope should come and reign over them. But this would be a work of too great length, and my intention is not to swell this treatise into an huge volume; which makes me only mention this notion, that you may consider with yourselves, as you have occasion, what a resemblance there is between Jesus and that person whom the prophets describe unto us. For this will prove a great confirmation of your faith in him; there being no doubt in the minds of the bitterest enemies of our Saviour, but that those *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*[m].

I have done now with these witnesses, who speak unto us from heaven, and who are one, you see, in their testimony, as well as in their nature. They all agree in this, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* There is not the least difference between them; no doubtfulness in their testimony; no backwardness to give it; no obscurity that should make it difficult for us to understand it: but with one mouth (as we say) they unanimously, plainly, readily and clearly pronounce him to be such a divine person, that if we should not hear him, and obey him, and depend upon him, I know not what we shall be able to say to so many witnesses, who will be ready to appear against us, whose testimony without any cause was slighted by us. Look how many voices have been heard from heaven; how many

[m] [2 Pet. i. 21.]

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witnesses have openly appeared in his behalf: so many divine reasons you are to conceive yourself to be provided withal for every word that Jesus hath spoken; which you are therefore to take for infallible, and to keep, as the apostle speaks[n], *without spot and unrebukable*, unto his second appearing. Listen to those words of grace which come out of his mouth. Abandon those sins which he requires you to forsake, and betake yourselves to the practice of those virtues which he so strictly enjoins: for the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost declare that this is the will of Heaven; and what is there in this world so considerable as to persuade the contrary? If he be not the Son of God, if he do not prove it by undeniable arguments, then do as you list: but if he be, then you are bound to yield him the humblest subjection, and it will be a strange stupidity to dispute the matter with him. There can be no colour for your refusal, should you deny to be governed by him, who comes with such authority, that *the fulness of the Godhead*, as you have heard, *dwells in him bodily*.

O what an honour hath God Almighty hereby done our nature! how highly hath he advanced and dignified it, by this strange and unexpected favour which he hath conferred on it, in making it his holy place! Consider but what I have now said of the testimony of the Holy Ghost to Jesus; which was an illustrious token likewise of God's wonderful love to us. Is it nothing that God should be manifested in our flesh, that he should dwell in us, and make his abode with us, and that we should become the *habitation of God through the Spirit?* Look upon the temple of old, and see how it glittered with gold; how it was adorned with cherubims and seraphims, which were an emblem of the angelical attendance in that place, but especially how it shined with the *glory of the Lord*, which appeared upon the mercy seat: and then reflect how precious, how dear mankind are to Almighty God, into whose nature this glory is translated; whom he hath beautified with greater excellencies, and made more splendid by a more intimate conjunction with it. Could any man then, after he had considered this, profane that nature which God hath so sanctified and separated to himself? Could he find in his heart to prostitute himself to any of those base and filthy actions, that

[n] 1 Tim. vi. 14.

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are below the dignity of human nature, nakedly considered, without such a presence of God in it? None can submit sure to the government of any fleshly lust, but he must forget that he is a man, created after the image of God. And there is none can continue in this unworthy slavery, but he must lay aside these thoughts also; that the Word was made flesh, and the image of the invisible God hath taken up his abode in our nature. By this he hath called us to the greatest sanctity. He remembers us what excellent creatures we are, and how glorious he is desirous to make us. And who is there that need despair of recovering himself by the grace of God, though he be sunk never so much below himself; now that God is come on purpose to lift him up? He hath sent salvation to us by one that is mighty to save. He hath revealed himself so graciously, and made such discoveries of his love and power and glory to all mankind, that they may confidently hope, if they will not cast away all care of themselves, to be restored to the image and likeness of God again.

But this discourse will come in more seasonably, when we have joined the strength of the other three witnesses to these, and heard them all together, some from heaven, others from earth, proclaiming this in our ears; *Behold the Son of God!* Jesus is your Lord: for he is the Lord of all things. And we shall be the more ready for a surrender to him, when we see withal how much we are beholden to God Almighty for his marvellous, inconceivable love, in calling us so many ways, by so many arguments, to repentance, faith, obedience, and everlasting salvation. That which I have now explained deserves to be remembered with the most affectionate acknowledgments, and we shall be better disposed to hearken to the rest, if we give him hearty thanks for what we understand already, and say:

A PRAYER.

Adored be thy inestimable love, O thou Holy Spirit of grace and truth, the mighty power of God; who hast *given such gifts unto men, even to the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Blessed be thy goodness, who didst anoint our Lord with that oil of gladness which hath run down to the meanest of his subjects. Great and wonderful was that heavenly power and love which

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appeared in such visible majesty upon him, and filled him with the Holy Ghost; so that *he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.* And much more marvellous was that Almighty goodness, which promoted him to the throne of glory in the heavens, *that he might fill all things.*

Praised be that astonishing love which first filled the apostles' minds with such heavenly light, and inflamed their wills with such fervent heat, that they boldly preached the gospel to all the world. For ever magnified be that diffusive grace which afterwards spread itself in such variety of gifts; *wrought by one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he pleased.* Let the whole church be giving continual thanks to thee, O Lord, for stretching forth thy hand in such signs and wonders, to glorify thy holy child Jesus, for giving by the Spirit to some a gift of wisdom, to others a gift of healing, to others divers kinds of tongues, to others prophecy; and for making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers: that every knee might bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord.

I confess him with all my soul: I honour him as my dearest Lord: I see thy glory, O blessed Jesus, by the light of the Holy Ghost, which hath shone so oft from heaven upon us: I see the power thou hast at God's right hand: I see the royal bounty of thy love. Now I know that thou knowest all things, and believe that thou art the faithful and the true, whose words shall never fail. O how much ought I and every Christian soul to rejoice in the consolations of the Holy Ghost! which hath brought us new assurances from heaven that our Saviour lives, and reigns, and sits enthroned at the right hand of God, in incomparable majesty and glory. Inspire all our minds and hearts, O thou quickening Spirit: inspire them, O Lord and giver of life, with such ardent love and devotion towards him, that we may hope to reign with him, and then shall we rejoice beforehand in this hope with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Do not wholly absent thyself from us, O thou Guide and Comforter of our souls, (though we have not been so grateful to thee, nor followed thy directions and counsels as we ought,) but still let thy gracious presence fill every part of the Christian church. Though we have not that *Unction* from above which endued them heretofore with the gifts of tongues, and prophecy, and healing, and working of miracles; yet pour down every where much of the spirit of knowledge, and love, and devotion, and purity, and fortitude, and undaunted resolution, and fervent zeal, which may be ever glorifying

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the great God and our Saviour Christ Jesus. O thou who didst open the eyes of the blind, and loose the tongue of the dumb, enlighten our minds to see more of those wonders which may inflame our love and encourage our hope; and open our lips, that our mouths may show forth thy praise. Still let there be hearts full of faith in the blessed Jesus; full of love to all mankind; full of ardent desire to see his kingdom come; full of wisdom to open the mysteries of salvation, to instruct men in the truth as it is in Jesus, and to convince them mightily, and persuade them to be obedient to it: that so, by the same heavenly power whereby the faith of Christ was planted in the world, it may be graciously preserved and promoted; and we may see it go forward and advance more and more, till every nation now on earth speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.

Let all the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee. Kindle in them such devout affections as may offer up continually the sacrifice of praise to thee. Let them praise thee with pure minds, and upright hearts, and unspotted lives; and in perfect unity and godly love say every where,

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost."

"As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen."

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Witnesses on Earth, and first of the Water.

HAVING given a brief account of the testimony of the first three *Witnesses,* and finding much satisfaction in their perfect agreement, we have the greater encouragement to go to the other three, who are also nearer to us than the former, and take that evidence which they are willing to afford us, for our further confirmation in this belief, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* These three, you read in the eighth verse, are such as bear witness on *Earth,* whereby we may be the better acquainted with them; and they are the more undeniable and farthest off from all question or exception: for should any be so bold as to dispute that there might be no such voices from Heaven,

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such apparitions of Jesus, such a descent of the Holy Ghost, (as it is possible there may be such conceited fools who think themselves wise by doubting of all things,) yet that there were such witnesses as the *Water*, the *Blood*, and the *Spirit*, no man can be so obstinate as to deny; they were so visible to all sorts of men whatsoever that would but open their eyes to behold them.

In the sixth verse (of which the eighth is but a repetition), after the apostle had said, that the only conqueror is he who believes Jesus to be the Son of God, he adds, *This is he that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ; not by Water only, but by Blood also: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness*, &c.: where that phrase HE CAME is to be diligently observed; which, in the style of the New Testament writers, signifies as much as that he manifested himself to be the Messias or Christ; he made it appear that he was sent of God. For thus the Messias is described in that question which John Baptist's disciples put to our Saviour[o]: *Art thou ὁ ἐρχόμενος, he that cometh?* that is, as Grotius well expounds it, he that is prophesied of by Jacob our father, under the phrase of *coming*[p]. And so he is said to be *the light which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man*[q]. And John Baptist tells them, *He that cometh after me is preferred before me*[r]. He was preferred to be their *king*, as the multitude cried out, saying, *Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord*[s]. There is the true explication of the phrase: he was *sent* by a special commission, such as never any man had from God the Father; he appeared with his authority, and acted in his *name*. And as before he appeared in his majesty he was called, *He that cometh;* so afterwards the apostle here calls him, *He that came:* the Person, that is, whom God had promised from the beginning of the world to *send* into it; his *Shilo*, that is, *his seed*, (as De Dieu hath excellently expounded that word,) the seed of Judah, and the Son of God: who in this fulness of time was to receive commission from God, and take upon him the government of the world.

[o] Matt. xi. 3. [p] Gen. xlix. 10. [q] John i. 9. [r] Ver. 15.
[s] Matt. xxi. 9.

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Now this Person, says St. John, *came* (that is, appeared to be sent of God as his *Son*, his *only begotten*) *by Water and by Blood:* which is as much as to say that it was manifest he *came* from God, and not of himself, by these two witnesses; to which the *Spirit* also adds its testimony, as it here follows, *and the Spirit bears witness:* which is such a certain evidence, that they who rely on this, together with the former, can never be deceived by it, *because the Spirit is the Truth.* As therefore God *sent* him, so he *came;* and by these *three witnesses* proved that he was the Person who God promised should *come*, and was now *sent:* whose testimony let us prepare ourselves to hear, and examine diligently, that the faith of Christ may still be rooted deeper in our hearts. And let us hear them, if you please, in that order wherein they stand in the sixth verse, (the place where we first meet with them,) receiving first the testimony of the *Water*, then of the *Blood*, and then of the *Spirit.*

OF THE WATER.

And by *Water*, sure, can be meant nothing else but either *purity* and innocence; or else *baptism*, which we use as a sign and a means of those. We may consider it in both senses, and not be in any danger to wander from the scope of the apostle, or do any wrong to the argument in hand, but receive most satisfactory evidence from both that *Jesus is the Son of God.*

I.

First, then, let us take it in the notion of *purity;* which we use the help of *Water* to procure in bodily defilements. And therefore when the prophet would express the intention of God to purify his people from moral filthiness, he says he will *pour clean water upon them*[t]: and in other places he calls upon them to *wash themselves;* when he would have them amend their ways, and lead new and holy lives. And when we speak of the *purity* of Jesus, wherewith he *came*, that is, demonstrated himself to be the *Christ;* we must consider that there

[t] Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

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is a double *sanctity* or holiness, for which he was eminent above all other persons, which may both be denoted by *Water*. The one is of his *doctrine*, wherewith Christ is said to cleanse his church, for which he died: *He gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it; having cleansed it with the washing of Water by the word* [u]. Where *the word* (the preaching of the gospel) is either the explanation of *washing with water*, or else denotes that Christian instruction which succeeds baptism; to which, by our being *washed with water* in the name of Christ, we are bound to attend, as the great instrument of our purification. The other is holiness of *life and conversation*; which the same word *water* is used to express in the Epistle to the Hebrews [v], where the apostle exhorts all those who believed there was such a royal High Priest as Jesus set over the family of God, to worship him with integrity of heart and sincere affection to him; nothing doubting of the truth of his promises, and *having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water*. Now by a short view of the perfect spotlessness of Jesus in both these, in regard of his *doctrine* and in regard of *life*, we shall be able from thence strongly to draw this conclusion, that he must needs be the *Son of God*.

I. First for the *purity of* his *doctrine*. It is such, that it not only teaches no evil at all, but teaches all manner of goodness; and severely prohibits every vice. There is not the least sin to which the holy Jesus gives any countenance; no, he declares *the wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*; whom he fully instructs likewise and encourages in every piece of true piety and virtue. So perfectly holy is his *word*, that if we did entertain it, the power of it would throughly wash us from all uncleanness, and not leave the least speck of dirt in our hearts. For he intends by that (as the apostle tells the Ephesians in the words following those now named) *to present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish* [x]. Whatsoever belongs either to our *knowledge* of God, or to our *duty* in every respect, condition and relation, his doctrine completely comprehends it.

[u] Ephes. v. 26. [v] Heb. x. 22. [x] Ver. 37.

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He hath first of all so clearly revealed to us the *One God* Creator of heaven and earth, that none could do it more expressly, or with greater reverence to his majesty. Whatsoever Moses hath written against idolatry, St. John here from Jesus (in the conclusion of his Epistle) hath summed it up in a few words, *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.* In this the Jews could not accuse him, nor durst let such a word fall from their mouths, that he was a false prophet, because he endeavoured to draw their hearts after other gods (which was the great mark of an impostor [v]). No, he tells them that *this is eternal life, to know the only true God* (which words are spoken in opposition to all others) *and Jesus Christ whom he had sent.* But in this they might have seen that his design was far more noble and glorious than that of Moses, who contented himself to preserve that one nation from the infection of idolatry: whereas our Lord Jesus plainly declared his intention was, by his apostles, *to turn* all nations *from idols, to serve the living and true God.* There was never any man that appeared so great a lover of God as he was. Never any man that undertook to set on foot such a design for the advancement of the universal knowledge of him. All the divine attributes and perfections also he hath revealed so perspicuously, that there never was such a manifestation made of them to the world as we see in him. From whom we learn how just, how good, how wise, how faithful, and how powerful, *the blessed and only potentate is, who only hath immortality, whom no man hath seen or can see* [x].

And if we would know our *duty*, either towards God in actions of *piety*, or towards men in actions of *righteousness*, or towards ourselves in actions of *sobriety*, we can learn it nowhere so easily and completely as if we go to him, and to those who have delivered it to us with great care and plainness from his mouth.

As for the actions of *piety*, he teaches us inwardly to *honour God* [y]; that is, to have an high esteem of him as our Lord, and as our chiefest good: to *love* him also, and that with all our *heart*, and all our *soul*, and all our *mind*, and all our *strength* [z]. And to *fear* him, seeing he can cast both body

[v] Deut. xiii. [x] [1 Tim. vi. 15.] [y] John v. 23. [z] Mark xii. 30.

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and soul into hell; which makes him again and again bid us be sure to *fear him*[a]: to confide likewise and *trust* in him, *the living God*[b]; to *hope* in his mercy[c]; and to *rejoice evermore*[d].

And as we are thus to worship him in our minds, so we are taught by his religion externally to *adore* him and *fall down* before him[e]; to *pray* to him both for ourselves and others[f]; and to be *incessant* in our prayers[g] (or to perform his holy duty very oft); and *to offer up by him the sacrifice of praise to God continually*[h]; *and in every thing to give thanks, which is the will of God concerning us in Christ Jesus*[i]; and especially *to show the Lord's death*, that is, publish it with thanks and praise, *till he come* to judge the world[k].

The manner also of addressing ourselves to God, he hath taught us so fully, that nothing can be added to it. For he tells us, *The Father will be worshipped in spirit and in truth*[l]: and that we must *lift up holy hands*[m]. And that when we pray we must *forgive others*[n], and *ask in faith*[o]: and avoid *vain babbling*[p]; and not affect *much speaking*, nor desire *to be seen of men*, and to join *fasting* and *alms* with our prayers and devotions to God[q]. It is impossible to conceive any thing more divine than these instructions.

To which he adds as rare precepts for actions of *righteousness*: concerning which he hath given us such an absolutely perfect rule, that it comprehends the measures of *charity* too. No wit of man can think of any thing more holy than that, *Love thy neighbour as thyself*; or that, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* This is a rule that reaches all men: and compendiously yet completely tells them how they should behave themselves towards each other. If a man were a magistrate, or a parent, or stood in any other superiority over his neighbours, he would desire honour and obedience from them; that therefore, says our Saviour, let him give to those who are in authority. If a man be our equal, we desire, if not his friendship, yet his fidelity in word

[a] Luke xii. 4, 5. [b] 1 Tim. iv. 10. [c] 1 Pet. i. 21. [d] 1 Thess. v. 16. [e] Matt. iv. 10. Rev. iv. 10. [f] 1 Tim. ii. 1, 8. [g] Luke xviii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 17. [h] Heb. xiii. 15. [i] 1 Thess. v. 18. [k] 1 Cor. xi. 26. [l] John iv. 23. [m] 1 Tim. ii. 8. [n] Mark xi. 25. [o] Matt. xxi. 22. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 16. [p] [1 Tim. vi. [q] Matt. vi.

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and deed; that very thing let us be sure to render him and all others in the same equality with us. If we be placed below others, we desire the favour, the help, the relief, and counsel of our betters: all these Jesus here teaches us to afford, with the same cheerfulness that we would expect them in their case, to those who are in want of our kind assistance.

Nay, he hath told us in particular what our duty is in these matters, by the mouths of his holy apostles; that no man may think to excuse himself by his ignorance and inability to apply a general rule to every action of his life. I shall not name all the places where you may find such words as these that follow, but only tell you, he would have us so far from doing evil to any man, that he requires us *to owe him nothing, but only love.* And this debt we must be *always* paying, and think ourselves debtors to *all men;* not only to treat them civilly, and give them good words, but *to love them in deed and in truth.* Which love must teach us as to be *meek and gentle* towards all men; *to put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking;* not to circumvent or *go beyond our brother in any matter;* not *to lie to our neighbour,* nor *defame* him; much less *do him any hurt* in his body or goods: so to relieve his poverty; to help forward his joy; to comfort him in his sorrow; to cover his defects; to make a fair interpretation of his actions; to let *our judgment* of him incline to the more favourable side; to mind what is *lovely* or grateful to others, and what things are of *good report;* to study things that *make for peace;* to compose and *reconcile* differences; to *beg pardon* of those whom we have offended, and make them satisfaction; and if any have offended us, readily *to forgive* their fault; to *forbear revenge* when it is in our power to requite an injury; to *do good for evil;* to *bless those that curse us;* to overcome men's *hatred* with *benefits;* to *pray to God for those who use us despitefully;* and to be *longsuffering* when it is fit to punish any man for his crime. And as for those who are truly pious, we are taught *to do them good above all other men;* to live with them *in unity* and godly love; to *sympathize* with them in their several conditions; *rejoicing with those that do rejoice, and weeping with those that weep.*

Nor hath he failed to tell us, by his holy apostles, with what

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kindness and indulgent affection husbands should treat their wives, and how they again should so affectionately observe their husbands, that they may together make up a lively image of that dearest love which is between Christ and his church. And he hath instructed us all how to behave ourselves towards magistrates, bishops, presbyters, masters, and parents; whom he hath also taught how to bring up their children, to use their servants, to feed and govern their flocks, and to rule their people committed to their charge; so that no man can say he goes without that lesson which is proper for his condition.

And then if we proceed to those things which we call *sobriety*, his doctrine is so holy and pure that it requires the greatest moderation in all things. It favours nothing that relishes of covetousness, or ambition, or voluptuousness, or any other violent and inordinate passion whatsoever: but quite contrary, commands us *not to labour* with too much eagerness and solicitude *for the meat that perishes; to lay up our treasures in heaven;* to be *humble and lowly*, like little children; to be *temperate in all things;* to be watchful and vigilant, lest we be *overtaken with surfeiting and drunkenness or the cares of this life;* to be *chaste and pure in heart; to mortify our members that are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence;* to abstain from *lasciviousness, foolish talking, wanton and unseemly jesting;* to *cut off our right hand* and *pluck out our right eye*, if it prove an offence to us; to take just measures of ourselves as well as others; to be content with our portion; to do those things which are venerable, grave, and beseeming our condition and employment; which if it be not according to our desires, not to repine or be dejected at it; if it be, not to be transported with vain joy, much less with pride and contempt of our neighbours.

And after all these and such like incomparable lessons, he teaches us to suffer any thing for well-doing, to bear all worldly troubles valiantly and with a magnanimous heart; to despise reproaches; nay, to rejoice when our names are cast out as evil, *for his name's sake;* in *patience to possess our souls;* and *not to be weary in well-doing, nor faint in our minds;* but *to endure chastening;* to persevere and *suffer with long patience;*

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to *stand fast in the faith;* to *quit ourselves like men,* and *to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

To all which duties he urges us likewise, by the purest, the most spiritual, the noblest and most divine arguments. He does not press us with such low and poor motives as the hope of riches, (though he promise us things convenient,) or of greatness, or of fame and glory, either while we live or when we are dead; but propounds his own example to us, and the example of all the saints that are gone before us; and quickens us with the hope of immortality when we depart this life, and assures us at present of the friendly protection of angels, and of the joys of the Holy Ghost; which none of those shall fail to receive who are not enticed nor affrighted from their duty, but resolutely hold out in their Christian warfare and overcome.

And if any man say that several philosophers taught excellent things, and gave rules of a virtuous life, and yet it does not prove the best of them to be so great as these witnesses are brought to demonstrate our Saviour was; the answer is, that none of them delivered such a complete rule of holy living as our Lord hath done; none of them touched the heart with such powerful reasons and divine motives; nor did any of them write without some mixture of folly, or themselves exactly perform that which they taught others. Besides, that none of them ever had the confidence to pretend to that quality, wherein our Saviour came, which you shall see presently is of great force to prove such an holy person as he was to be indeed what he pretended, *the Son of God.*

II. But first let us a little consider the second sort of purity, that of the life, in which our Lord Jesus far outstript all others. He did not only preach after that manner I have now related, but so he lived, and became a complete pattern of that which he taught. He was a "living law," as Lactantius calls him[q], to all his disciples; whom he taught by himself, and not merely by his lectures of piety. Other teachers had conceived in their minds and painted in their orations a virtue that was nowhere to be seen, for they were not able (as the same author elsewhere speaks) to confirm by present examples that which

[q] Lib. 4. Instit. c. 25, [tom. i. p. 339.]

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they asserted in their doctrine. Their auditors might still say, that nobody could live according to their prescriptions, because nobody ever did. Behold, therefore, our Saviour comes *to do*, and not only to preach *the will of God.* And so holy, pure, and free from all blame were all the actions of his life, that his greatest enemies could lay nothing to his charge, but only certain words, and those such as contained most perfect truth, as he proved by his actions and many other ways.

He was the Lamb of God *without spot and without blemish*[r], as St. Peter speaks. He offered himself by the eternal Spirit *without spot unto God*[s]. His whole life was such a fair example of that piety, humility, charity, gentleness, forgiveness, peaceableness, patience, and all other virtues which he taught; that God restored him to life again, after they had crucified him and put him to death, because there was no fault in him. He was frequent in prayer to God, and sometimes continued therein a whole night together. Upon all occasions he gave him thanks. He loved his glory and the good of mankind more than his life. He went about doing good. And he taught his family to be as kind and tender-hearted as himself. He was meek and lowly in heart. When he was abused he was dumb as a lamb before the shearers, so opened he not his mouth. He was full of respect towards magistrates and governors, very sweet and affable towards the poorest people, exceeding kind and compassionate towards his envenomed enemies, and perfectly contented in the lowest condition. When foxes had holes, and birds had nests, but he not where to lay his head, none could be found more cheerful, thankful, and well pleased than he was. And as for his fortitude, courage, constancy, resignation, and all other suffering virtues, there never was any thing comparable to them. For he endured the cross, and despised the shame, and contentedly took the contradiction of sinners, saying, *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.*

To all which you must add, that he was thus pure and undefiled, thus perfectly pious, just and good, in an age that was leavened with the doctrine of the Pharisees, who by their traditions had made void the law of God. Then he was complete

[r] 1 Pet. i. 19. [s] Heb. ix. 14.

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in all manner of Godlike qualities, when the strictest sect of religious people were utterly void even of common honesty. In those days he did all things that God required, when it was counted the greatest sanctity to do little but what men prescribed. When virtue was despised, when faith and judgment and the love of God were hated, when there was nothing but the very dregs of Abraham's piety remaining among his children; then Jesus testified to them that their deeds were evil; then this light shined in that darkness; and this Son of God entered upon a more than Herculean labour, of cleansing the temple and the people, that were fuller of filth than the Augæan stable.

And it is moreover to be considered, that, though he opposed those idle traditions of theirs, which evacuated the laws of God, yet he neglected none of the ceremonial ordinances of Moses, but therein fulfilled all righteousness. Nobody could accuse him for the breach of any commandment that had a divine stamp upon it. When they quarrelled with him for healing on the Sabbath day, he soon stopped their mouths by showing them that they themselves would not deny such a charity to an ox or an ass upon that day, if it were in danger of perishing, or stood in need to be led away to watering. Nor was this so great a labour in him as it was for them to pull a beast out of a pit; for he did but speak a word, and the cure was done without any further pains. They did but discover therefore, in these exceptions, their own rancorous malice and base hypocrisy; who scrupled such charitable actions as these on the Sabbath day, but made no bones, as we say, at any time to undo even a poor widow, whose house their conscience was wide enough to swallow. By his sharp but necessary reproof of such crimes he incurred their hatred: which could not dishearten him in his duty, but still he continued his free admonitions and reprehensions, though he knew it might cost him the loss of his life. The doing of God's will was a great deal dearer to him than that. For this end he came into the world, as he told Pilate, that he might bear witness to the truth. And therefore it was his *meat*, his great delight, to *do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.*

To conclude this; so free from all spot was the holy Jesus,

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that the devil's malice could not tell what fault to charge upon him; but, as Eusebius[t] recites from the heathen oracles, was forced to acknowledge him to be εὐσεβέστατον καὶ ἀθάνατον (and as he says a little after) οὐρανίων ἀψίδων οἰκήτορα: that is, 'a most religious person, and made immortal after death; an inhabitant of the celestial orbs.' Porphyry himself, a great factor for the old paganish worship, but one that had tasted of Christianity, and knew what was in it, durst not (as he there notes) say any thing to his disparagement: but from his own beloved oracles, though he regarded not the holy Scriptures, was constrained to give the forementioned testimony of him. All that he was able to say in detraction from his honour was this, that Christians did foolishly to worship him: though he granted him to be carried to heaven, ὥσπερ οἱ εὐσεβεῖς, 'as pious men are wont to be;' and therefore advises his own scholars not to blaspheme (i. e. speak evil of) Jesus, but only to pity the ignorance of his followers.

It was very cautiously spoken, and moved no doubt the pity of Christian people towards one that thought himself so knowing. For whatsoever he unskilfully determined, we are able to make it appear, that we do well to worship and honour him, even as we honour the Father of all: since his life is confessed by his enemies to be perfectly pure and unspotted; and his doctrine teaches men nothing but to do as he did. This conclusion we shall easily draw from the premises, if they be but diligently considered. And

1. First of all, it seems to me incredible that any one but he that was in the very bosom of God (that is, knew his mind most intimately, as I have said before) should be able to declare his will so fully, and to give such a divine rule of holiness as Jesus hath done, even by the mouth of those who were skilled in nothing but how to mend a net, or catch fish, or some such poor artifice, till he inspired them. All the words that he spake himself, both for the matter and manner of them, do not sound like the words of a man, but of a god. *Never man spake like this man*, say they, that did not go to be instructed by him, but to apprehend him[u]. The report of others did not make him so great as they found him when they came to see

[t] Lib. 3. Demonstr. Evang. [cap. 6. p. 134.]

[u] John vii. 46.

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and hear him themselves. Bad men are commonly more odious to us when we enter into conversation with them, than they were whilst we remained strangers, and had nothing to do with them. Nay, persons of known worth are sometimes more magnified by fame, than they appear when we approach nearer them. But Jesus was everywhere admired and glorified; and never more than when men grew the most familiar with him. None could despise, though they might hate him, unless it was when he thought good to say nothing, and to work no miracles; which made Herod and his men of war set him at naught. When he opened his mouth, they that did not believe on him wondered, as you have heard, at the gracious words which thence proceeded.

For beside that his discourses were incomparably beyond the common pitch of wise men, his delivery of them was altogether divine; for he spake *with authority*, and was *a prophet*, as the disciples going to Emmaus relate to himself, *mighty in deed and word before God and all the people*[x]. And such were those poor ignorant men whom he chose to be his apostles: who not only convinced gainsayers with the strength of divine arguments, but also delivered instructions for good manners, with such exactness and such plainness of speech, so familiarly, and so agreeably to the noblest inclinations of human nature, that it is manifest they understood it better than the greatest philosopher of them all. None of them ever described the several duties of mankind, and urged them with such proper arguments, in so few words, and yet so clearly and fully as these illiterate men did. Nor was there ever a set of men so affectionately desirous of the good of others as these men were: who were *willing to impart unto them not only the gospel of God, but their own souls also, because they were dear unto them.* So St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians[y], every one of whom he *exhorted, and comforted, and charged, as a father doth his children*[z]. But he never used any *flattering words* towards them; nor *spake as pleasing men, but God, who trieth the hearts;* nor carried on any design of covetousness, or winning of glory to himself; nor would be, in the least, burdensome to them; but *was gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her own children*[a].

[x] Luke xxiv. 19. [y] 1 Thess. ii. 8. [z] Ver. 11. [a] Ver. 4-7.

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Show me the man that ever spoke with such wisdom and judgment as they did, and with so much tenderness of heart. None but their Master ever preached or wrote with so divine a spirit: which John the Baptist describes in such words (with which I shall content myself) as prove the excellence of his person, from the excellence of his doctrine, which he delivered unto men. They are in John iii. 31, where he says, *He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.* That is, he who appears from heaven with such a divine authority, who delivers the mind of God in so rare a manner, that one may see he hath been with God, must needs excel all other persons in dignity; Moses and the prophets, and me also, who am of an earthly extraction, born like other men, and can speak only like a man, poor and low things in comparison with those which that heavenly Teacher delivers: who, I must needs again confess, is far superior to me, because he is not a mere man, but comes from heaven; and so is above all prophets whatsoever, who had more of the earth than of heaven in them; that is, knew none of those secret counsels of God concerning man's everlasting bliss, nor could direct us in so short, but plain and sure a way to it as he hath done. And then it follows, ver. 32, 33, *And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, &c. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God:* that is, he speaks such things that a man may easily see he is the only begotten of the Father, who is in his bosom, and knows his very mind; having as certain an understanding of heavenly things as we have of what we see and hear. And therefore whosoever believes him does no more but assent to God; whose words he speaks, by a particular commission he received from him to act in his name.

It is very observable that just after the mention of these Witnesses[a], St. John adds, that *he who believes not this record which God gives of his Son hath made him a liar:* as on the other side John the Baptist here says, that *he who doth receive his testimony* (i. e. believes) *solemnly acknowledges God*

[a] 1 John v. 10.

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to be true. From whence I conclude, that what is said in this Epistle hath a relation to that which is writ in the Gospel: which I take to be no more than this;—that the divineness of Jesus his doctrine; the purity and heavenly strain of his discourses; his preaching as if he had *heard and seen* the Father, and knew the state of things above; his speaking the words of God, (not as another's, like the prophets before him, but as his own,) was a great testimony to him that he was sent of God in that quality that he pretended: so that they who received him did but rely upon the truth of God, and give up their faith to him; who hereby, as well as other ways, persuaded them that this was his Son.

2. But then that which I mainly insist upon is this second consideration: that his pure, most holy doctrine and life was a great argument of his divinity; because this was part of his doctrine, that he was the *Son of God.* For who can think that a person of his virtue, who taught men both by word and deed such reverence to God and such justice and charity to men, could be guilty of putting such an open affront upon the one, and such an abuse upon the other, as to challenge this title, and propound himself to be received in this quality, if he had not a just and undoubted right to it? He that came with so much sanctity and holiness, in all his other words, and all his other actions, one cannot but conclude was as holy and free from sin in this as much as in any thing else; that he said he was the Christ, and persuaded the people to believe he was *the Son of the Blessed.*

This is certain, he affirmed himself to be the Christ, the Son of God, first to his disciples: and that both before his sufferings[b], and also after his resurrection[c]. And then to others also, who were as yet none of them, as (1) to the woman of Samaria[d]; then (2) to the blind man whose eyes he opened[e]: and lastly, he asserted it when he was brought before his judges, (as you have heard already,) and this very matter was brought in question; yea, when they adjured him by the true God, and as he bare any respect to him, to tell them the very truth in this thing. Now who is there that would not infer from hence, that all the rest of his doctrine being so opposite

[b] Matt. xvi. 16, 17; Mark ix. 41. [c] Luke xxiv. 46.
[d] John iv. 26. [e] John ix. 35–37.

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to all lying and every other vice, and his whole life giving such a proof of his perfect virtue, that they had nothing to ground a charge upon against him, but merely this profession of his own, wherein, if he had pleased, he might have been silent; it is not in the least credible that a person of his integrity should, after so long speaking truth, now at the last be guilty of speaking a lie? And (2) a lie of such a dangerous consequence as this, by which, if it were one, he and a world of souls must be undone? Yea, (3) that he should tell it so often to so many persons? And that (4) before the magistrates, who are gods in this world? And that (5) when they were desirous and very importunate to know the truth? Yea (6) before God himself, by whose name he was solemnly adjured to speak nothing but the truth? How is it possible that such a man as he should be so void of all fear of God as to offend him in so high a manner? There are none sure whose understandings are sound, or whose consciences are not cracked, who can so much as fancy, much less persuade themselves to believe, that a person whose innocence was so great, that all the false witnesses they could find, men who cared not for their own lives, could not be masters of his, should now, in such a serious manner, when he was going out of the world, put such an horrid cheat upon it, and with the loss of his life too upon a shameful gibbet, as to say that he came from God, if he had no warrant for it. All sober men must rather confidently believe that he who arrived, as I have often said, at such an height of blameless purity in all other points whatsoever, was as free from blame in this also; and said nothing but the very truth, when he so solemnly and so frequently, before God and before men, in his lifetime and at his death, professed that he was *the Son of God.*

And if any man still object, that his uprightness indeed was so great that without all doubt he would not invent such a tale as this, and affirm what he did not believe; but yet he might be mistaken, and believe that which was not true: he may answer himself from his own concessions. For if he consider how free our Saviour was from all ambitious desires; how modestly he refused to be advanced; how void he was of covetousness and all other worldly appetites, which may blind a man's reason and abuse his understanding; and likewise how admirably he discourses, how rational and convincing, how

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sublime and heavenly all his sermons are; he will soon be satisfied that it is not credible a person of his wisdom should be ruled by mere fancy, or of his goodness be carried into a vain dream by any sensual affections which had no place in him.

This is the first acception of the word *Water*, which you see clears our Lord from all imputation of fraud, and washes off all aspersions that might be cast upon him of imposture. For there is not the least spot of blemish appears in the whole course of his life, to render him suspected of any guile, much less of so great a deceit as this, to feign himself the Son of God. Nay, his doctrine is so divine, so much beyond the strain of the wisest men that ever spake, that it demonstrates he was as little obnoxious to be deluded himself as he was inclined and disposed to delude others.

II.

Let us now proceed to see what testimony may be drawn from this *Water* in behalf of our Lord, if we take it in the other sense, for *baptism*, in which we make a profession of *purity*. And there is a twofold *baptism* by which our Lord may be said to *come;* that is, to appear a person sent of God, as his only begotten Son: the first is *the baptism of John;* the second is his *own* baptism.

I. As for the baptism of John, it may be said that our Saviour *came* by or with this *water;* both because John, when he baptized men with water, preached that he was *coming*[f]; and because he brought this baptism along with him, or rather sent it a little before him, as a testimony of him, which would *prepare his way*, and dispose their hearts to receive him as the *Christ of God*. For it is manifest that it was intended as a proof of this, from those words of our Saviour himself, by which he stopped the mouths of the Pharisees, and took away all matter of cavil from them, when he asserted his supreme authority both over them and over their temples. There you read that our Saviour having come in triumph to Jerusalem[h], and there received *hosannas* from old and young, and been saluted as the Son of David, that is, their *King* (who the prophet had said should *come* unto them *meek, and sitting upon*

[f] Matt. iii. 11; John i. 30. [g] Matt. xxi. 23—26. [h] Ver. 8, 9.

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the foal of an ass[i]); and he having cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple[k], and prohibited them to carry so much as a vessel through it (as St. Mark tells us[l]), and being now teaching the people there, the chief priests and the elders came to him, and examined him *by what authority* he did these things, and *who gave* him this authority. That is, they bid him produce his commission, if he had any, and show them from whom he was *sent* and *came* to take this office, not only of a teacher, but of a reformer, and that of the temple itself; and likewise who warranted him to ride in such pomp to Jerusalem, as the Son of David, the Lord of that country.

The answer of our Saviour to this question is, that they might soon be resolved if they would but satisfy him in another question concerning another person, who was *come* also in an unusual manner among them: and that was, whether John had a commission from God to baptize, or came of himself, by the allowance of men only. Answer me but this question, says he, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Consider of it, and tell me what you think; *Whence was John's baptism? from heaven, or of men?* That is, who gave him his power to preach, to reprove, to call men to repentance, to receive confession of sins, and to do all other things belonging to his ministry, which baptism accompanied, and constantly waited upon? Did God bid him go? or was it from a motion of his own?

While they consulted for an answer to this question of our Saviour's, they clearly saw their own answered. And they were not so dull but that they could easily discern our Lord would irrefragably prove his divine authority, and make them confess he was the Messias; unless they would adventure to say that which all the country would decry not only as a falsity but an egregious calumny. For if they had affirmed that John entered upon the office of baptizing and teaching the people out of his own private will and inclination, or by commission from some men, in this opinion they knew they should be singular, because *all the people held him to be a prophet:* that is, it was the sense of the whole nation then (and so it was afterward, as appears by Josephus) that the Baptist was a

[i] Ver. 5. [k] Ver. 12. [l] xi. 16.

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divine man, inspired by God, and sent of him to do what he did; which would have made them the public scorn and hatred, if, without a reason able to confute all the country, they should have denied it. But then if they should grant this, and say he was sent of God (which was the only thing they could say with safety, if they would affirm either), they saw themselves in as ill or a worse case another way; being as much afraid of what Jesus would say if this were confessed, as they were of what the people would say if it were contradicted. For as the people would have cried shame on them if they had disparaged John's ministry, so if they allowed it to be from heaven, then they knew Jesus would unanswerably prove his commission to be from heaven too, and tell them that John, whom they took for a divine man, should acquaint them with his authority, and from whom he had it; for he bare witness, in express words, that he was the Christ, the Son of God. They thought it a safer course therefore to leave this question undetermined, and to say *they could not tell* whence his baptism was, than, by resolving it either way, to give with their own mouths so great an advantage to him whom they questioned and opposed.

But, by saying nothing, they plainly confessed that if they had gone on to dispute with him he would have had the better of them, and have made it appear from John Baptist's testimony that he had an authority far greater than that which they must have acknowledged in him. For though our Saviour thought good, for brevity sake, to propound this argument to them by way of question, and so let them reason it out within themselves; yet it was as forcible, they plainly felt, as if he had pleaded with them in this manner:—My authority, which you call in question, is very evident. I have it from heaven, and not from men; as I prove by this argument: If the baptism of John be from heaven, then from thence I come. Now you cannot deny, if you will speak out, that his baptism is from thence; and therefore I make the conclusion that my authority is divine. The consequence was as clear as the sun, that if John was sent by God, then so was Jesus in that quality wherein he appeared; because John (as you shall see) gave this testimony to him, which could not be questioned after they had granted him to be a prophet. The only thing that could be denied in this argument was, that John's baptism was from

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heaven; or that God authorized him to say and do what he did: but this they durst not oppose, because then, to rid themselves of one enemy, they should bring the whole nation, as we say, about their ears, who did not take John for a counterfeit, but thought *that he was a prophet indeed*[m]. Nay, they themselves never adventured to call John before their council, much less advised how they might put him to death, as they did our Saviour: but, on the contrary, *many of the Pharisees and the Sadducees came to his baptism*[n]. They were as inclinable to reverence him as the people; for God, who had spoken heretofore to that nation so long by prophets, whom they thought themselves bound to believe, had plainly manifested him to be one. Nay, he was not a common prophet, but one of an extraordinary rank: *the prophet of the Highest*, his father calls him; and *more than a prophet*, in the language of our Saviour, as you shall hear presently.

What should they do then? which way should they turn themselves, now that they durst not deny the proposition, upon which this consequence evidently depended, that Jesus was the Christ? Their only refuge was silence: for though thereby they acknowledged him too hard for them, and suffered his divine authority to stand supported by this unanswered argument; yet they had rather part so, and shamefully break off the disputation which they themselves had begun, than let him go away with their express confession and testimony, that, if the prophet of the Highest might be believed, he was their *Christ*. It was no disadvantage to our Saviour, but to their own cause, that they answered, *they could not tell* whence John's baptism was: for hereby it appeared he had so much to say for himself, that if they would say any thing in this matter, and not obstinately hold their peace, they must say as he did, that he was *the Son of God*. For John Baptist, whose heavenly authority they durst not deny, though they would not confess it, received all men into this belief when they came to him, that there was one *coming after him* who should gather disciples as he did, and that he was *the Christ*. This he told them was the very end of his preaching and baptizing, *to prepare the way of the Lord;* to make them fit and ready

[m] Mark xi. 32. [n] Matt. iii. 7.

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to entertain the next prophet that should appear, as greater than him, even as *the Son of God.* And therefore when Jesus did openly appear and come to his baptism, and John saw the Spirit descend and remain on him, then he told them in plain terms that this was the person whose way he came to prepare, and that they must receive him as *the Son of God*, and *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*[o]. And that which he said at this time, there is no doubt he declared at all times, when the people came to be baptized. For thus the Jews describe Jesus when they disputed with some of John's scholars about his baptism[p]: *He to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth*[q], &c. Thence he is frequently called one of his *witnesses*, and said to come for this end, that he might be a *witness* to him, *that all men through him might believe;* that is, might be persuaded that Jesus was the *Word of God*, by this testimony of John[r]. And our Saviour afterwards appeals to this testimony of his, and bids the Jews consider it[s]. For you know, says he, that he bare *witness* to me, when ye sent to him: *and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.*

And great reason there was that they should consider it, and be convinced by it. For John *was a burning and a shining light* (as it there follows[t]), and they themselves *were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.* If that fit was over, and now they were less delighted in him, it was merely because he testified of Jesus. There was nothing else to damp their affection; for otherways they could not but confess him to be an illustrious person: who shined with the greater splendour, because he was miraculously conceived in his mother's old age; and his birth was predicted by an angel; and his father struck dumb because he believed not his word; and this angel appeared in the very temple, at the altar of incense, and therefore was not like to be a delusion: and his father was endued with the spirit of prophecy, and his tongue unloosed when this child came to be circumcised. Then he spake concerning his quality, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and John appeared to be prophetically endowed from a child; God also took care of his education in the wilderness, where he was

[o] John i. 29, 30, 34. [p] John iii. 25. [q] Ver. 26. [r] John i. 6, 7, 8. [s] John v. 32, 33. [t] Ver. 35.

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trained up to a resemblance of Elias; so that his life and manners transcended all in that age; and his spirit and doctrine was so powerful and convincing, that it was hard for them to say who he was: the people admiring his sanctity and preaching, held him for a prophet; and some of the priests and Levites having such an esteem of him, that it was a question among them, whether he was not *the Christ*.

They were sent, you know, from Jerusalem to inquire about it [u]; and yet this person, who shined with such a lustre, whom Jesus himself calls the greatest that had been born of women, of whom he was baptized, declares to these persons who came to ask who he was, that he was not worthy so much as to carry the shoes of him that was *coming* after him [x]; and that his doctrine, as you have heard [y], was of *the earth*, flat and low in comparison with the words that Jesus should speak; who he told them plainly was the Christ, the Son of God; but as for himself, *he confessed, and denied not; but confessed* (that is, repeated it more than once, and affirmed constantly) *I am not the Christ*.

What reason was there then, why both they that heard his testimony of Jesus, and they that sent these messengers to make inquiry, should not believe him, since all this was so known a truth? His father Zacharias was a priest, whom they could not but reverence more than to imagine he studied to deceive, especially since he was noted for a righteous man, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. And John himself was a Nazarite, one whose head was never troubled with the fumes of wine or of strong drink [z]; and bred up likewise in the *deserts* or wilderness of Judea [a], after a plain and simple fashion, where he was like to learn no craft or guile. If anybody should take the confidence to fancy that there might be a compact between Jesus and him, to cry up and speak great things of one another, he is confuted by the plain story of both their lives. I have told you how far Jesus was from seeking his own glory; and John Baptist was a man of such confessed sanctity and severe virtue, that none then could suspect him of such a guilt. Besides that it is manifest they never had seen one another, at least John

[u] John i. 19, 20, &c. [x] Ver. 27. [y] iii. 31. [z] Luke i. 15. [a] Luke i. 80.

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had no knowledge of our Saviour, until he came to be baptized of him: when he immediately proclaimed him to be that person whom he had magnified so much, and told them should be preferred above himself, before he had any such acquaintance with him. And it is not unfit to be remembered, that even before he was born, John Baptist leaped in his mother's womb, when the blessed Virgin came to visit her; as if he had then begun to confess him to be the *Lord* (as his mother calls him [b]), and to rejoice to be a *witness* unto so great a person.

For a conclusion of this, let the place be noted where Jesus came to be baptized of John; and where he gave so ample a testimony to him: for from thence we shall draw something which will help to settle this belief in us, that Jesus is the Son of God. It was at *Bethabara beyond Jordan*, as St. John has recorded [c]. There the priests and Levites, who were deputed by the *Sanhedrim*, or great council at Jerusalem to go and examine him, received their answer from him again and again, that he was not *the Christ*. For there he was baptizing, and there Jesus came to receive his baptism; for as he was speaking those words which you read [d], and saying he was *not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoes; Jesus came from Galilee* (as St. Matthew writes [e]), *to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him*. Now this name *Bethabara* signifies the *place of passage*, or *going over* (בית, *Beth* in their language being an *house* or *place*, and עברה, *Abara*, a *passing over* from one place unto another), and therefore in all likelihood hereabouts the children of Israel went over this river Jordan, when they entered upon the land of Canaan. This was the place of their passage, when God brought them out of the wilderness to their desired possession; and so had the name of *Bethabara* affixed to it in memory of so great a blessing.

Now Jesus being baptized at that very place where Joshua or Jesus (as he is called [f]) conducted the children of Israel over that river unto their rest; and receiving there such a testimony both from God the Father, and likewise from John the prophet of the Highest, it was a notable sign and token (joined with those two) that this person, called Jesus, also was he that should lead them into the heavenly rest, and be the *Captain of*

[b] Luke i. 41, 43. [c] John i. 28. [d] Ver. 27. [e] iii. 13.
[f] Heb. iv. 8.

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their salvation. And the Holy Ghost descending also in this very place upon him, here he was anointed to be the guide, the leader, and conductor of God's people; that is (as we render the word ἀρχηγὸς), *a Prince and a Saviour*[g], who should put them in possession of the greatest blessings. As *Moses laid his hands* on Joshua near this place (which we may reasonably conjecture from Deut. xxxiv. 9), and made him the ruler and governor of that nation; so here did God himself *give all things into the hands of Jesus*, by the Holy Ghost coming down upon his head, appointing, constituting and ordaining him to be the royal prophet who should bring all the world to his obedience.

And it is observable, that to this place our Saviour a great while after returned again, and there made his residence when the Pharisees sought to kill him[h]. I cannot but think that this evangelist would have us learn something from his so particular remembrance of this place, both at our Saviour's baptism, and at his return again into the country beyond Jordan: for it is not their manner to mention such circumstances in so short a history as this is without some considerable reason. Now as we have guessed at the cause of his being baptized and receiving the testimony of John at Bethabara; so it is likely the reason why our Saviour went hither again and here *abode* was, that he might call to the people's mind what had been done here formerly, the testimony which John received from God concerning him, and the testimony which thereupon John gave to them of him at this remarkable place: for he knew *those things which were done at Bethabara* had a great force in them to work a much better disposition in the people than was in the murderous hearts of those at Jerusalem, and to move them to become his disciples. According to which supposition, you read in the very next words[i], that many resorting to him began discourse among themselves concerning John, and of what he had spoken concerning our Saviour, (for which we can find no occasion but the place, and perhaps our Saviour's putting them in mind what had been said and done here,) and that *many believed on him there.* The word *there* is to be remarked, for it tells us that these disciples were won to Jesus at that place where *John at first baptized.* They remembered, it is probable, what he had said; how he told them

[g] Acts v. 31. [h] John x. 40. [i] x. 41, 42.

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that he saw the Holy Ghost here descend and remain upon him, and that this was he whom he had spoken of before, who was greater than himself, and that he *saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.* And they likewise now beheld some *miracles* wrought by our Saviour (whereas John wrought none), which proved John's words to be *true which he spake of him,* that he should be *preferred before him;* be the true Joshua whom they must all follow, the Messiah, the *King* of Israel, to whose conduct they must trust if they meant to enter into rest.

I have done with the *first baptism,* that of John; which if you consider thoroughly, the person from whom Jesus received it, the place where he went into the water, the testimony that was here given him, both by the Father, by the Holy Ghost, and by John, you will easily grant it might well be affirmed in respect to all these, that *he came by Water,* and that this was one of his *witnesses.*

II. It is time now to come to the second particular, and take into consideration a while his *own baptism* which he administered: for that is not without some proof that he was the *Christ.* Indeed *Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,* as you read John iv. 2. But yet because whatsoever a servant doth by the authority of his master, it is reputed the master's act, and he himself is said to do it; therefore Jesus also is said to baptize in the same evangelist[j]. Now this was an argument to the Jews that he was the Messiah.

1. First, because all expected that the Messiah or *Christ* should come with baptism, and thereby 'renew the world,' as the Hebrew doctors sometime speak. It began, they say, in the time of Moses, when he brought them to receive the law from God, and entered them by this ceremony of washing into a new religion[k]: by which, they tell us, proselytes were received into their communion in succeeding times; when they passed from the state of Gentilism, and were regenerated to worship God with the Israelites. And therefore when *Christ* came, and with him a new world, (for there is nothing more common in their books than to call his days *the world to come,*) they concluded he should begin it with baptism, as Moses did that frame of things which he erected.

[j] John iii. 26; iv. 1. [k] Exod. xix. 10, 14.

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This is certain, it was one of their marks of him, that in his days there should be an universal baptism and cleansing of the people[l]: which they gather from Zach. xiii. 1, where we read of a *fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;* and from several places in the prophet Isaiah, where he speaks of the *waters in the wilderness*, (in which St. Mark tells us[m] *John baptized,*) and from Ezek. xxxvi. 25, where he says, *I will sprinkle water upon you,* &c.: *a new heart also will I give you:* which is applied by the apostles to the days of Christ, who began his new kingdom with *washing with water*, or baptism in his name. And therefore when John the Baptist came with this water, they sent, as I noted before, to know of him who he was, thinking he might be *the Christ.* For which there appears no reason, (for he did not work so much as one miracle,) but that *all Judea, and all the region about Jordan went out to him, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins*[n]. And therefore when he told them that he was not the *Christ*, nor *Elias*, nor that *other Prophet* whom they expected to accompany him, they ask him then, *Why baptizest thou*[o], if thou art none of these? They thought it was not in the power of any man to institute and introduce this new ceremony, unless he was either *the Christ*, or his *forerunner*, or some other *prophet* (Jeremiah it is like), who they fancied should rise from the dead and come along with him. A new ceremony, I call it, because, though we should grant that baptism was in use among them, (as much hath been said by Mr. Selden[p], among others, to prove it,) yet thereby they only received proselytes and their children from other countries. But it was not the manner to baptize Jews, such as were grown and adult; much less did any of the masters in Israel gather disciples after this fashion; and therefore the *Sanhedrim* might well send to inquire who this was that took upon him to call all the country to repent and sanctify themselves; and also like a prophet had particular scholars ministering unto him.

[l] [Compare the author's remarks, Aqua Genitalis, vol. i. p. 16.]

[m] Mark i. 4.

[n] Matt. iii. 5, 6.

[o] John i. 25.

[p] Lib. de Jure Nat. [lib. ii. cap. 2. tom. i. col. 175 sqq.] and L. de Succession. [tom. ii. col. 72. Cf. de Synedr. lib. i. cap. 3. tom. i. col. 778 sqq.]

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The most learned of the Jews indeed had but confused notions of things to come, and the priests and Levites, you see here by their questions, did not certainly know whether baptizing with such an authority was a sign that a man was the Christ or not: yet they generally inclined to believe that it was a note of him, as may be gathered, I think, from Luke iii. 15: where you read that *the people were in expectation,* (knew not what to think, but waited that John would declare *the Christ* to them,) *and all men mused in their hearts of John;* that is, *debated* and *reasoned* within themselves (as it is in the margin) whether John would at last declare himself to be *the Christ* or not. And another argument there is to prove that they looked upon baptism as a mark of the Messiah; for as soon as our Saviour began to make this his business, and to authorize his disciples to baptize, then they were more *in suspense* (as that word *expectation* in St. Luke now mentioned may be rendered) than ever; and knew not what to imagine when they saw two great men doing one and the same thing, and thereby drawing the people after them. But after they had debated the matter better, it seems they began to leave their opinion of John's being the Messiah, and to look rather upon Jesus as the person; at least to have some thoughts that it might be so.

For we find in John iii. 25, that there arose a controversy between some of John's disciples and some Jews who were not his disciples, *about purifying or cleansing:* by which may be understood baptism, which was the sign and the instrument of it. And the dispute (as far as the following discourse directs our conjectures) was this, Whether their master John's baptism or that of Jesus was the best, and which of them a Jew should receive? for they saw them both baptize, *Jesus in Judea*[q], and *John in Enon near to Salim*[r]. To which of these places therefore they should resort seems to be the question. If John's baptism was from heaven, why should it be laid aside, or why should another come and take his work out of his hand? Was Jesus now sent with a greater authority, so that they must leave John and go to him? To this his disciples being able to give no satisfaction, they go to the Master himself for a resolution, and tell him, *Rabbi, he that*

[q] Ver. 22. [r] Ver. 23.

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was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. As much as to say, We are much perplexed, being in doubt which of you two to receive for our master: for Jesus, who was *baptized of thee at Bethabara*, (a note they imagined of his inferiority to John,) and yet had a testimony from thyself that he was sent of God too, does not only now take upon him thy office, and thereby lessen and extenuate thy authority, but quite eclipses and obscures thee, baptizing far more than thou dost. Which shows that they began to conceive John was not the man they had taken him for; but that Jesus rather should enjoy that name which they had been apt hitherto to bestow upon him: and their argument was, because Jesus baptized more disciples than the other did.

To this John answers in the next words: *A man can receive* (or take unto himself) *nothing, except it be given him from heaven*[s]. That is, let not this trouble you, that Jesus baptizes, and all come to him; it is no more than I told you, that I was nobody in comparison with him: for no man can honestly assume more authority to himself than his commission gives him; and for that reason I could not do so much as Jesus does, because I have not received so much, nor can pretend so large a power from God, who alone can give it. And then he adds, that it is strange they should forget what he had told them in express words; *Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him*[t]: that is, it is a wonder you raise this dispute, when I never gave you any occasion to fancy me to be as great as he, but told you plainly, as you yourselves may remember, that I was not your *king* anointed by God to rule over you; all the honour that I had being no more than this, to be ordered to come and prepare his way for him. I never intended that my washing you with water, or gathering disciples, should be a mark that I was the *Christ*: alas! I only baptized you with the water of repentance, that you might be disposed to believe on him who I told you was *coming*. To whom you would do well, now that he is come, to go and be baptized of him; for he brings a nobler baptism than that of mine, being as much above me as the

[s] Ver. 27. [t] Ver. 28.

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bridegroom at a wedding is above him who only waits upon him, and prepares things belonging to the marriage. That is the sense of the 30th verse:—I never intended to set up myself as the principal person in this business that we are come about: for I know very well that *he who hath the bride is the bridegroom;* that is, he is the Head of the church or people of God, to whom God hath designed that high honour; and that is Jesus, not I, who am only his friend, sent before to make things ready for him. It is a great honour for me to be one of his disciples, and to receive his instructions; and I am glad with all my heart that I live to hear him preach. It is an exceeding great pleasure to me, all the joy I can desire, to hear him, the Bridegroom, speaking to his bride the church, and telling her himself what he intends to do for her, and what he would have her to do. Question no more, therefore, to whom you should go for purifying from your sins, nor think it strange that he baptizes more than I; for *he must increase, but I must decrease*[u]. There remains now nothing for me to do; but I must be obscure, as Theophylact glosses, like the day-star when the sun arises. All must become his disciples, even they who now are mine, and I myself too, as in truth I am: for he says, *the friend of the bridegroom*, that is, himself, *standeth* (which was the posture of a scholar before his master) *and heareth him, rejoicing greatly because of his voice*, that is, because he is come to teach, who could do it better than himself. For there is as much difference, he presently adds in the next words[x] (which I have explained before), between their two doctrines, as there is between the heaven and the earth. And therefore they must needs be inexcusable who did not *receive his testimony*[y], and become his disciples; who came with such authority from God[z], and had not the Spirit by measure[a], but the power to reveal the whole will of God, and do all his pleasure[b]. For, as he concludes, *everlasting life* is the portion of him who believeth on Jesus; but if a man believe not *he shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Thus you see John himself directs them again unto Jesus, and bids them go to his baptism, become his disciples, and no

[u] Ver. 30. [x] Ver. 31. [y] Ver. 32. [z] Ver. 33.
[a] Ver. 34. [b] Ver. 35.

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longer doubt whether he was the Christ or not. For as he did not pretend to an equality with Jesus, so they should see his fame continually decline and grow less by the growth of the glory of Jesus, who should shine alone by himself, and quite darken him. So Gregory the Great[c] expounds those words now mentioned, *He must increase, and I must decrease*[d]; the sense of which he seems to have hit better than any that I have seen, when he says, "In what was John diminished and our Saviour advanced but in this, that the people, seeing the abstinence of John, and his retirement from the society of the world, imagined him to be the Christ; whereas our Saviour, whom they beheld eating with publicans, and keeping the company of sinners, they fancied was not the Christ, but only a prophet? But when in process of time both Jesus, who was taken for a prophet, appeared to be the Christ, and John, who was taken for the Christ, was discovered to be but a prophet, then was fulfilled what he had foretold, *He must increase, and I must decrease.* For both our Saviour increased in the esteem of the people, because he was acknowledged to be what he was; and John decreased, because he ceased to be called what he was not."

2. And this leads me to the next consideration, which I shall but briefly mention: that, as John directed them to prefer our Saviour's baptism before his, and to become the disciples of a far greater Master; so the end of the baptism of Jesus was to entertain men for his disciples, that thereby they might make profession of their belief in him. And here now our Saviour began to eclipse the lustre of John, and showed himself much superior to him; both in that he did not administer baptism himself by his own hands, as John did, but appointed his disciples to do it, who thereby became equal with John; and that he gathered disciples to himself, whereas John baptized them into the belief of *him that was to come after him*, as you read expressly Acts xix. 4. None, I suppose, can doubt of this, but that they who received baptism from our Saviour's disciples, who waited constantly upon him, did thereby own Jesus for *a teacher* or master *sent of God* (as Nicodemus speaks[e]), and

[c] Hom. 20. in Evang. [tom. i. col. 1518 E.]
[d] John iii. 30. [e] Ver. 2.

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consequently professed themselves desirous to learn of him, and ready to believe what he taught. But I cannot say that they baptized them now into the name of Jesus, or into a belief that he was *the Christ*, as they did after his ascension into heaven. For they were forbid to publish this openly[g]; men were to learn it by degrees under his discipline, to which they delivered themselves by being baptized of him. Yet this prepared them for the belief that he was their Christ; which his apostles afterward most zealously and strongly asserted by baptism: for when he was exalted at God's right hand, they went, according to his commission, and *discipled all nations*, baptizing them into his name, as well as into the name of the Father; that is, they engaged them to believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, otherways they would not baptize them.

By this *water*, therefore, he may be said to *come*, because he hereby made proselytes to himself, whom he undertook to teach and instruct after the manner of the prophets, but with an authority which spoke him to be greater than all prophets; and because it was not a baptism like John's, with simple water, but was presently after accompanied with the Holy Ghost. Nay, the baptism itself was a *witness* to him (joined with what went before), because it argued authority, and such as was much superior to that of John, though he was greater than any prophet; which could be no other, therefore, but that of Christ. For who beside could baptize the whole nation, and into an higher institution than his whom they took for the Christ? who confessed and asserted (and nobody appeared to contradict it) that he *was not that light* (by whom they must begin to be illuminated by baptism), but Jesus was *the true light, which coming into the world lighteneth every man.* John's baptism therefore, as St. Basil[h] aptly calls it, was only εἰσαγωγικὸν, introductory to something else more perfect than itself; that is, to our Saviour's baptism, which was τελειωτικὸν, that which completed men in a full belief that he was the Christ.

3. For, lastly, the baptism which the apostles administered, especially after his resurrection and exaltation, was an entrance

[g] Matt. xvi. 20.
[h] Exhort. ad Bapt. [hom. xiii. de Divers. tom. ii. p. 114 B.]

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of men into a new religion; for they did not baptize them into *Moses*, but into another name, that of the *Lord Jesus*. This was a sign that he, who had so many ways been *approved of God among them*, as St. Peter speaks[i], was indeed the Christ. For what greater mark could there be of supreme authority, than the setting up, in such a manner as he did, an institution and discipline which was not known before; and teaching those who received his baptism to observe a new law, without those rites which had been hitherto used? Who could repeal the ordinances of Moses, nay, abrogate circumcision, which was ancienter than Moses, but only he who had the same power with him that gave the law to Moses, and circumcision to Abraham their father, viz. the Son of God himself? Yet this did our Jesus; and baptism was the rite appointed by him for the admission of disciples into the profession of this new religion, which took away the old as unprofitable. By this they were *born again*, and became his children, that is, his scholars (for the *sons* or children *of the prophets* were their disciples, those who learnt of them), whom he endued with his principles, and called after his name. And he plainly declared, as you read in his discourse with Nicodemus, that no man could have any part in that kingdom, which the Messiah was setting up in the world, if he contented himself with the old religion, and were not *by baptism born again;* that is, suffered himself to be further informed, and proceeded to entertain the religion which he delivered. Thus far Nicodemus was gone already to believe him to be *a Master sent of God;* which was the opinion of others of their rulers besides himself; for he says, *we know* it. Why then did he not own it by receiving his baptism, and thereby put himself under the discipline of this Master? that being instructed by him till he acknowledged that he was the Christ, he might be taught at last *by the Spirit*, when it came down upon the apostles; and so be perfectly *born again*, or informed in the Christian religion. Till this was done he was but ἐξ ἡμισείας φιλόχριστος (as Gregory Nazianz.[j] calls him), 'a lover of Christ by halves.' To make him an entire Christian, he was to receive his baptism, and to own him to have full power and authority from God to make what change he

[i] [Acts ii. 22.]

[j] Orat. 16. [ed. Ben. Orat. xiv. §. 40. tom. i. p. 285 D.]

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pleased, so far as to turn them into new men, and to make them over again. The Pharisees, one would think, saw very well that this was the consequence of his gathering so many disciples by baptism that he out-did John the Baptist: for, to avoid their rage, which they had conceived against him upon this account, but never expressed against John, *he left Judea* (where he was baptizing, as you heard before[k]), because they had great power there, and *departed into Galilee again*, where their authority was less[l]. They were afraid of an innovation in the state of things, which they had a mind should continue as they were. Their baptism, they saw, would signify nothing, if he went on thus to make disciples; whom he informed according to his own mind, and persuaded to believe on him as their King, in whose sovereign power it was to make *all old things pass away*, and cause *all things to become new.*

By this *water* therefore he may be said to *come*, and it may be called one of his *witnesses;* as he *baptized*, that is, gave his apostles authority to baptize men, not into Moses, but into himself; to learn new lessons of him, and to leave the old, though they had been taught by God himself. Who found no fault at all with this *baptism*, but justified it, as you shall see, many ways, to be according to his mind, and in pursuance of his will.

And so much pains may suffice about the examination of the *first witness* of these *three* that speak on *earth*, which is *Water:* the *holiness* of Jesus both in his doctrine and life; and the *baptism*, both of John and of Jesus.

I wish that every one who considers how great and necessary a proof was this of Jesus his being *the Son of God*, would labour to prove himself to be indeed born of him by the same argument of purity and holiness. For as we could never have believed Jesus to have been God's Son, unless he had come thus by water; no more can any man rationally conclude that he is one of those whom he will own for his children, unless he conform to his holy will, by washing himself from all filthiness, and becoming clean every whit. Read over the sermons and the life of Christ, and remember that your baptism engages you to learn of him, and to become like him. Express that honour

[k] John iii. 22. [l] iv. 1, 2, 3.

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towards God, that fear and that love of him which he requires. Employ yourselves carefully in all actions of justice, charity, and sobriety. Yea, be prepared cheerfully to follow him, in suffering as well as in doing his blessed will. This will be an infallible testimony that you are the children of God; as, on the contrary, if you want this witness, all other evidence of it will fail you. There is no reason to distrust this; but the stronger your confidence is without it, the more grossly you deceive yourselves, if you conclude yourselves to be dear to him. You find both these strongly asserted in this Epistle. For the affirmative read ii. 29: *If you know that he is righteous, know ye that every one that doth righteousness is born of him.* And, iii. 7: *Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* For the negative, read the following words, ver. 8, 9, 10: *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

And for your encouragement to purify your souls, remember that the purity and holiness of Christ's life and doctrine secures you of the truth of all his gracious promises. We may say with a greater assurance than the Psalmist did in his days, *The words of the Lord* (i. e. his promises) *are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*[m]. Which should make us value them more than *thousands of gold and silver*, though never so perfectly refined; and to say as he does in another place, *Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it*[n]. Those metals are not freer from dross after they have passed never so oft through the fining pot, than his promises are from all mixture of deceit. We may rely upon them with the greatest confidence, and be secure they will never fail us. It is as certainly true that God will take us to be his sons and daughters, that he will *dwell in* us, and give us

[m] Ps. xii. 6. [n] cxix. 140.

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everlasting life, as it is that Jesus is the Son of God. He that says the one says the other too: and he may be alike believed in both.

But then, *having these promises, we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God* [o]. For the Son of God was manifested, you heard, for this purpose. And this was the end for which *he gave himself* (i. e. to die for us) *that he might sanctify and cleanse his church with the washing of water, by the word* [p], *and redeeming us from all iniquity, purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works* [q]. Which if we study sincerely, then this *water* here spoken of is part of the *waters of life:* and this testimony gives us assurance that we shall have our share in those eternal good things which he hath promised in his holy Gospel: for he is the truth, and in him there is no lie. But of this more hereafter, when we have heard the following witnesses, and given glory to Jesus, and made our acknowledgments to him in some such words as these.

A PRAYER.

I believe, O Lord, not only that thou art *a teacher come from God,* and *speakest the words of God;* but that thou art *above all,* the very *Word* of God itself; into whose hands *the Father hath given all things.* I admire the holiness of all thy precepts, and rejoice in the purity of thy exceeding great and precious promises. Thou art *the Truth,* the *Holy One of God,* without spot or blemish, in whose mouth was found *no guile.* There is all reason that we should *receive thy testimony,* which thou hast given of thyself; and all that thou hast testified to us to be the will of God; and believe that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

Good Lord, *increase my faith:* that, as I see still further demonstrations of thy power and glory, and cannot but acknowledge the perfect sanctity, equity and goodness of all thy laws, and be in love with the beauty of thy most holy life; so I may feel my heart inclined more and more to submit itself to be governed by thee, to obey thy will, and to imitate thy example. Happy are those holy souls, who have learned of thee to live *soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;* and whose hearts, by that means, are full of the blessed hope of immortality hereafter, and of thy tender care of

[o] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [p] Ephes. v. 26. [q] Tit. ii. 14.

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them, while they are here. There is nothing so desirable as *to be holy even as thou who hast called us art holy, in all manner of conversation.* It is the perfection of our nature, the end of our being, and the true satisfaction of our hearts, to have thy image formed in us in righteousness and sincere holiness. Imprint this sense deeper, O blessed God, in mine and every Christian heart: that it may be our perpetual delight, as well as our study, to give thee the *honour* that is due unto thy name; to *love* thee with all our heart, and soul and strength; to preserve an holy *fear* of thee in our mind; to *trust* in thee, and cast our care upon thee; to *hope* in thy never-failing mercies; and to *rejoice* evermore in thy love and that good hope, which are better than life itself.

O that we may never cease to testify our true love, and honour, and fear of thee, with all other religious affections, by *praying* without ceasing; and offering the sacrifice of *praise* continually; and in every thing *giving thanks*, especially for the oblation which our Lord made of himself to thee; which love, may it be published with perpetual praise and thanks everywhere, to the end of the world! And give us the grace to add unto our love of thee a sincere and unfeigned love of all men. That *we may do to them whatsoever we desire that they should do to us.* Let this be the constant rule of all our designs, desires, words and actions. Let it ever be before our eyes, to make us duly honour and observe our superiors, pity, succour, relieve, and comfort all those who are below us, and be just, faithful and friendly to all others. O that every man would speak the truth with his neighbour, and be charitable in their judgments one of another, meek and gentle in all their words and behaviour, ready to distribute and to do good, studious of the things that make for peace, forward to be reconciled to those who have offended them, to pass by injuries, and to do good for evil; and especially to *be kindly affectioned one to another in the love of the brethren; in honour preventing one another!*

For which end, endue us with all true humility of spirit; with very contented minds and moderate desires. Let no covetousness, no ambition, or love of any pleasure, betray us to dishonour thee, hurt our neighbours, or abuse ourselves. Help us to possess our bodies in sanctification and honour; to preserve our hearts chaste and pure; to be temperate in all things; to mortify our members that are on the earth; to put away all foolish talking and corrupt communication out of our mouth; and to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Finally, whatsoever things are sincere and true, whatsoever things

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are grave and honest, whatsoever things are just and equal, whatsoever things are pure and modest, whatsoever things are amiable and endearing, whatsoever things are of good fame and well spoken of; if there be any occasion to exercise a virtue, if there be any thing laudable, dispose us to have these things always in our mind, and to be readily prepared for them. That so we may be good in every relation; governors and subjects, priests and people, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, doing their duties faithfully, and to their mutual comfort, joy and satisfaction. And if thy wise Providence call any of us to part with any thing for thy name's sake, O that our love may give an eminent proof of its sincerity, by resolved and patient suffering, with an humble, meek, and cheerful submission to thy holy will!

Then shall our souls rejoice and triumph in thee, when we not only call thee *Lord and Master*, but *do those things that thou sayest.* It will be our exceeding joy to think that thou lovest us as thy children, and delightest to behold thine own image in us. We shall rejoice that thou reignest, and rejoice again in hope that we shall reign with thee. Blessing, honour, glory and praise shall we be for ever giving unto thee; who hast *washed us from our sins in thy own blood,* and *redeemed us from all iniquity, that we should be holy and unblamable before God in love; looking for thy mercy unto eternal life.* Amen and Amen.

CHAP. VI.

Concerning the second witness upon earth, the Blood.

Come we now to hear what the next witness says, which we shall find to give in an evidence as strong as the former, and that is, the *Blood.* By this word everybody presently understands the sufferings and death of Jesus; when his blood, you know, was shed upon the cross in a most ignominious manner. For that envy which began to rise in the Pharisees' hearts, (as I observed in the end of the foregoing chapter, from John iv. 1,) when they saw him baptize so many disciples, never ceased boiling till it turned into perfect gall, and the rankest hatred and malice in the world: which was never satisfied till they had *baptized him* (as St. Luke speaks, xii. 50) with his own blood. For the present indeed, as you read there and in many other places, he avoided their snares, and went

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out of their way when he thought they intended to apprehend him, because he would preserve himself till he had preached all the country over. But when that was done, he suffered them to take him at a public feast, and delivering up himself into their hands, let them do with him just as their murderous malice inclined them.

Now this voluntary oblation and sacrifice of himself to suffer what they pleased to inflict, was such an evidence that in truth he was the Son of God, as he had made his disciples believe; that there is a particular mark set upon it, to this purpose, both by himself and by his apostles. He himself, in his discourse with Pontius Pilate, just before his crucifixion, and when he stood before him condemned by the Jews, for saying he was the *Son of God*, expressly affirms, that *for this end he was born, and therefore he came into the world, that he might bear witness to the truth*[a]: which was as much as to declare, that he had rather die than lose the end for which he had lived thus long; which was, to speak the truth, and particularly this truth, that he was indeed a king (as you there read), the very Son of God. This was the thing he would justify, whatsoever he suffered for it. God had appointed him to seal this with his death, and to attest it in the most solemn manner, even before his judge here on earth, and when he was going to be judged by God; and therefore he would not for all the world deny it, or not confess it. We ordinarily say, when we would affirm any thing very strongly, that if it was the last thing that ever we should speak, we would not stick to maintain it. And just so did our Saviour; I came, says he, into the world for this end, to *bear witness to the truth*, and here I take it upon my death that I do not swerve from it in the least, when I say that I am the *Son of God*.

St. Paul also, as I have noted already, takes particular notice of this, when he remembers how *Jesus did witness a good confession before Pontius Pilate*[b]: that is, asserted this truth, that he was a King, though not of this world, by confessing it before him who sat in judgment upon him, with the apparent danger of his life. He durst not retract any thing which he knew to be a truth, though he knew withal it would

[a] John xviii. 37. [b] 1 Tim. vi. 13.

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prove so costly that he must defend it with his blood. He stood in this to the very last, that he was the Christ, and durst not, to save such a precious life, speak one word otherwise: for then he knew that he should have been a liar, like the Jews who denied it.

This that hath been thus premised to the following discourse is very serviceable to the demonstrating what a witness his blood was: because it calls to mind that which is necessary to be here again considered, how he lost his life for nothing else but merely because he confessed that he was their *Christ, the Son of the Blessed.* Many causes of death were industriously sought for, and sundry false witnesses boldly rose up against him; and yet none of their testimonies, when they came to be scanned, were found to be ἴσαι, (as St. Mark's expression is, xiv. 56, 59,) 'equal' to the indictment or charge that was brought against him, and to the intended judgment which was to pass upon him. There was nothing ponderous enough, of sufficient weight, to justify such a sentence as that of death, which they were desirous to pronounce upon him: and therefore they despaired of attaining their end, unless they could have such words out of his own mouth as in their opinion would prove him a blasphemer; for which they might justly condemn him. *Which of you* (says he himself, John viii. 46.) *convinceth me of sin?* No, when they must either prove him a sinner, or themselves for apprehending him without a cause, they were not able, no, not by the help of a great sin, in bringing false witnesses into open court, to fasten any crime upon him which would touch his life. All that they could find to warrant a sentence so heavy was nothing but what they got out of his own mouth, by adjuring him, in the name of God, to tell them whether he were *the Christ.*

His affirming this was the thing for which he was adjudged by the great council of Jerusalem to suffer death. This was the only truth they told Pilate, when they brought him into his court, that *he made himself Christ, a King*[c]. This was the inscription over his head, the title upon the cross, *This is the King of the Jews*[d]. This was the thing they scoffed at after they had condemned him themselves[e]; and which they

[c] Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 7. [d] Luke xxiii. 38. [e] Matt. xxvi. 68.

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taught the soldiers to mock withal after he was condemned by Pilate[f]; and which the chief priest, with the scribes and elders, made the subject of their taunts and jeers as he hung upon the cross[g]. Read all these places, and you will see, that the asserting of this being the cause of his sufferings and shame, St. John had reason to allege his *blood* as a great evidence or witness to this truth.

Now that the strength of its testimony may the better appear, let these things following be distinctly considered:

I. First, that blood is the life of every living creature; and therefore the pouring out of this is the losing of one's life. It is not only a frequent precept in the law of Moses that they should not eat the blood, because it was the life of the beast; but common observation teaches us, that it is the vehicle or chariot wherein the spirits ride their circuit round the body; and that if it lose its way and run out of the body, all motion ceases, the spirits flying away together with it.

II. Consider then further, that nothing is so sweet as life, and that of all other things we naturally most abhor death. All that we eat and drink is to prevent it; and men are too much inclined to do unworthy things to escape it, because it robs us of all our enjoyments here, though never so near to us. *Skin upon skin*, (says he who *hath the power of death*[h],) one skin after another, though it be never so tender and delicate, and never so painful to part with it, *yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life*[i].

III. Life therefore being a thing so pleasant and desirable, and death so dismal and affrightful, no man, sure, in his perfect health and perfect wits, will be persuaded to part with the one and run headlong into the other for a mere fancy, by which he received no benefit at all while he lived, and can hope for none when he is dead. What rational man is there (as our Saviour appears to be by all his discourses and actions) who knows the value of life, who that is not in a frenzy (the least spice of which is not discernible in him) will choose to part with his life, and so part with all his friends, who are infinitely desirous of his company, when he may innocently save it, and comfortably enjoy those lovers, friends, and acquaintance, and all

[f] Mark xv. 18. [g] Matt. xxvii. 40–43. [h] [Hebr. ii. 14.] [i] Job ii. 4.

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other things which he must leave by dying? Ask yourselves, (that is the best way,) is life such a trifle that any of you are inclined to throw it away in a mere humour? Is it so contemptible, that a serious man, and one that need not be miserable, will studiously lose it only to be talked of? Nay, would any of you take the most cruel pains and torments in your way to death, and pass out of the world with all the disgrace imaginable, merely because you will; when it is as much in your power to free yourselves from them all, and to live in pleasure, honour, and good repute among your neighbours?

IV. Much less would any man, that is not beside himself, die for a lie. Death, being uncomfortable in itself, would become still more dismal if it should be for that which we saw proved an untruth; but most of all black and dreadful if it must be endured for a lie: that is, for such an untruth as we had devised ourselves, and knew to be a falsity; and whereby we intended to deceive, and might have chosen whether we would have told it or no. If any man should be tempted to tell a lie, yet what should tempt him to endure the rack, yea, to suffer death for it, when neither he nor any man else shall get any thing by it, and he might live far more honourably by telling the truth? Make yourselves judges, and inquire of your own minds whether you can think of any thing that hath such a power of persuasion in it. No, no, we all love life better than so. When a man will give all that he hath for it, (as the tempter himself said,) it were very strange if he should not part with a vain lie that he might enjoy it.

And therefore the apostle here bids us consider this, that *Jesus came* not *by water only*, but *by water and blood: that* is, he did not only preach this, and by his holy life justify his integrity in what he said, but he died to attest this and make it good. If the *water* be not enough to persuade us that he did not falsify, yet the *water* and *blood* together are sufficient to confirm us in a strong belief of his sincerity: for should the tongue of an honest man chance to slip, and to speak on a sudden what he knew to be false, yet he would never be such a fool and a villain too as to die to make it good: whereas Jesus both said and took it upon his death, that he was God's Son; in neither of which such a person as he could possibly design to deceive us. He was not so shallow but he could

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easily see that a lie would some time or other be disproved; for all men naturally hate it, and, when they have any suspicion, can never be at rest till they have discovered it. And therefore if he proposed to himself glory and honour, fame and a great reputation after a shameful death, he could never be secure that he should win it, but rather had just cause to fear the forgery would be detected: and then it would have proved a greater blot upon him, and more reproached his name, that he was a wilful obstinate liar, than the cross or gibbet, the buffetings, spittings, cruel mockings, and all the other indignities that he endured. This would have branded him with eternal infamy, and have made his name stink throughout the world. Nothing could have stigmatized him like this, (unless it had been the mark of folly added to that of insincerity,) that he was a shameless deceiver: and therefore I conclude that he would have *witnessed a good confession* by denying all that he had said concerning his being the *Son of God*, if he had not known assuredly that he had said nothing but that great truth, which must not be denied, whatsoever miseries and disgraces it cost him to make it good.

V. And this truly is much to be considered, that if he had been wont to cheat and speak falsely, there could not have been a more seasonable time to make use of some lie, than now that it would cost him his life to assert this, which, no doubt, he took for a truth. If he would but have denied this one thing, and said that he was not the Son of God, all their malice, as I said, could not have found a crime great enough to warrant the taking away of his life according to their law. And therefore, supposing him an impostor and deceiver, as the Jews called him, he must be a very silly one who would not now make use of his art to save himself, when that one little word *no* would have done it, in answer to the question that the high priest put to him. For what reason can be imagined why he should now scruple to tell an untruth, (if he were a man of that stamp,) which would bring such a great advantage to him as the preservation of his life?

VI. He might at least (especially if he had dealt with Beelzebub, as the Pharisees calumniated him,) have put some trick or other upon them, and shifted himself out of the hands of his enemies; for that would have got him more credit and fame

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than dying for a lie. Why did he not escape from them, if he had not both believed this, that he was the *Son of God,* and thought it necessary also to attest it, even with his *blood?* Had he not opportunity to run away? or rather might he not have kept himself among his friends, far enough out of their reach? Was it not a question whether he would *come to the feast* or not[i]? Nay, after *the assembly of the wicked had enclosed him,* as the Psalmist speaks[j], had he not power to break through them, and make his escape? Yes, sure; for what else is the meaning of that which you read John xviii. 6, that *the band* of men which came to apprehend him *went backward and fell to the ground,* when he did but tell them that he was the man whom they sought for? Was not this a fit time to fly and get away, when they had no strength to lay hold on him? Had not he power as well to depart, as to weaken their hands that they could not approach him? Nay, was it not far easier to go away himself than to make them lie prostrate there? No doubt of it: only he would stand to it, as I said, and make it good by his blood that he was the Son of God. He showed that he had not lost his power to baffle them, but his will was not to use it. His death was a voluntary sacrifice: *He laid down his life* of his own accord, and *no man took it from him,* as it is John x. 18. All their armies, had they *compassed him about* (to speak in the Psalmist's phrase) *as strong bulls of Bashan,* had they *gaped upon him with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion,* i. e. with the most greedy desire to devour him, could not have touched him, unless he had been pleased to deliver himself up to their fury, and chosen to become their prey, that they might do execution upon him. And therefore it is most absurd, and contrary to nature, to imagine that he would have thus freely exposed himself to such cruelties and vile usage as he saw was intended for him, unless he had certainly thought it a most eligible and honourable thing to endure them in defence of a great truth, which it concerned all the world to have well asserted and vindicated from all suspicion of falsehood.

Would it not have angered any man but him to be betrayed by a domestic servant, by a friend; one whom he had freely

[i] John xi. 56. [j] [Ps. xxii. 16.] [k] [Ver. 12.]

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chosen to be a great minister in his kingdom, and had made at present the keeper of his purse, besides many other favours conferred on him? Was it not a vile dishonour, first to be brought before the magistrate as a criminal, and then to be abused there by base soldiers, and the dregs of the people, as if there had not been a more contemptible wretch in the whole country? What was it then to be beaten and cudgelled, to be spit upon and mocked, to be loaden with lies and forgeries, to be condemned to suffer among thieves, to be counted less worthy to live than a murderer, to be scourged, to be crowned with thorns, to be crucified, that is, to endure a tedious, a disgraceful, a painful and accursed death; and after all this to be unpitied, to be laughed at even upon the cross, and called a senseless deceiver, who had not the wit to keep some of his kindness for himself, but, having saved the lives of others, could not now at last save his own? Can you think of any one that would have the heart to offer himself freely to suffer such things, but only he, who took all this so patiently that he did not utter one discontented or angry word? And who can think that he would have endured them when he might have easily avoided it, unless he had thought it necessary and worthy to submit himself to such torments and reproaches, that he might confirm this truth, and make it live by his bloody death?

VII. Which had the greater efficacy in it to show the importance of this truth, and the certainty which he had of it; because he affirmed it not only before the high priest, when it was apparent they intended mischief against him, but before Pontius Pilate also, as I observed above, from John xviii. 37, when they were importunately desiring him to condemn him. If we could imagine it was his rashness and heat that made him say as he did before the council of Jerusalem, yet he had time enough, sure, to have cooled himself before he came to be tried at this other tribunal of the Gentiles. Why did he not think of some other answer, now that he saw the Jews were not in a sudden passion, and transported with a fit of rage to condemn him; but by a concocted hatred were resolved to pursue him till they had his blood? There can no account be given of it but this, that his death was an advised thing, and his *blood* deliberately shed to obtain the greater belief to him,

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because he professed again and again (though he knew he must die for it) that he was *Christ their King.*

VIII. And observe likewise, that even when he was in the midst of his sufferings, and when he was ready to give up the ghost, he again sets his seal to this truth; calling God his *Father* twice as he hung upon the cross. First, when he prayed for his enemies, *Father, forgive them* [m], and then when he prayed for himself, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* [n]. With these words he resigned up his soul to God. And had it not been a seasonable time now to retract what he had said, if it had not been a truth which must be justified to the last gasp? How can any one think that a man who preached the life and judgment to come, and lived as if he believed it, would venture to die with a lie in his mouth? and that of so high a guilt, and which he knew also could not be long undetected here, as it would be severely punished in another place, nay, which he himself, he knew very well, would presently confute? For he frequently had said, as his very enemies understood, that he would rise again the third day after he was killed; which he must needs think would prove a lie, if the other had been so, when he told them he was *the Son of God.*

God, who only can raise the dead, but cannot lie, would never have justified so blasphemous a lie as this; and given it an undeniable authority by fulfilling his word. For as his bloody death plainly proved that he believed himself to be the Son of God, and took it for an undoubted truth; so his resurrection was an infallible proof that he was not mistaken, but had witnessed that by his death which was as true as he thought it. His death showed that he was certain of it; and his resurrection makes us certain that he was not deceived. These two therefore must be joined together to make up a complete evidence: and so they are, as you shall see, for the witness of the *Spirit* contains the resurrection in it. Yet I must add, that his *Blood*, considered alone, did not barely prove that he believed he was God's Son, and thought it the greatest sin to deny it; but it proved also that he had great reason for such a belief; reasons so weighty that they overbalanced the natural love of life. And therefore this alone may be called one of his *witnesses*, which not only justified his in-

[m] Luke xxiii. 34. [n] Ver. 46.

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tegrity, but declared that he had the greatest assurance and the clearest evidence of that which he asserted: being so certain of it, that the fear of death could not make him doubt it, nor all the torments in the world tempt him to deny it.

IX. And if you consider what manner of person Jesus was, you will soon be satisfied also that he was not liable to mistake strong fancies for weighty reasons; but was as far from being deceived himself, as he was from any intention to deceive others. The principal thing indeed which his *Blood* testified was, that he did not on set purpose go about to put a cheat upon the world, or invented his doctrine himself. Yet, all things considered, it proves likewise that his doctrine was true, and ought to be believed by us. For such was the quality of his person and of the rest of his doctrine, that they plainly manifest he was neither led by fancy nor possessed with any demoniacal illusion, when he said he was *the Son of God.* So great was his wisdom and the sharpness of his understanding, that any man, who hath not lost his own understanding, may easily see he could not be apt to be gulled with the impostures of imagination. And so great and discreet was his piety, that it is as visible he was not obnoxious to be deluded any other way. When he was but a child, he amazed the principal men of the nation with his questions and answers: and afterward, in the whole course of his preaching, there appeared nothing but what declared a most prudent, sober, and excellently composed mind. Nothing of inequality and unevenness in his temper. No rapturous discourses or ecstatical expressions. Nothing that savoured of melancholy, which imposes upon some; or of pride and vanity, which abuses others. But the greatest gravity and seriousness, mixed with admirable sweetness and humility, is the plain character of our Saviour. Then look over all his doctrine, and where shall we find any that ever spoke so clearly, and with so much majesty of righteousness, temperance, charity and piety, of all our duty towards God and man, as he did? who had the gift of comprehending much in a few but perspicuous words, of illustrating his doctrine with apt and familiar resemblances, of confirming it with powerful arguments, and of confuting all the cavils of his adversaries with the strongest reasons. None of which things are to be found in any of those who have been abused by their own

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fancies and passions, or by the jugglings of evil spirits: as will appear more plainly by considering a little more particularly those two cavils

Let it be taken then for granted, that there have been some men who meant not to deceive, that were notwithstanding so overborne by a strong fancy or haughty imagination, as not only to take their own dreams for divine revelations, but also most vehemently to assert them, even with the loss of their liberties, estate, nay, and life itself. And suppose withal that there have been some who were so fully possessed with a conceit of nearer communion of God, that they took themselves to be Christ himself, or apostles sent by him; and that no torments could persuade them to think otherways. Yet see what a vast difference there is between such vain pretenders and our blessed Saviour, even in the very words that they spake. And first, I think it is very considerable that you never read of any man so presumptuous as to fancy he was the very Son of God, who sits at his right hand, and rules over all, and hath power to judge the quick and the dead. No, these vain enthusiasts have only conceited that they were, after I know not what spiritual manner, made one with Christ, and so united to God, that, as they phrase it in swoln words of vanity, they were "Godded with God," and "Christed with Christ." But who discerns not the disparity between this foolish language and the words of soberness which our Saviour spake? Which indeed is the most remarkable thing. If you consider all the doctrine of these empty pretenders, there is nothing more ridiculous. They have ever affected big words, lofty and high-flown phrases, and mystical expressions, wherewith they love to stuff their books and their discourses: which either have no meaning, or, if they have, it is very poor and despicable, when it comes to be stripped of the fantastical language wherewith it is clothed. And therefore such men have been so far from amazing any considerate persons, that they have rather moved their laughter and scorn, while they heard them babble nothing but mystical nonsense, with abundance of confident boldness.

And if they found any followers, they were such as had no depth, no solidity of judgment; but were carried away merely with the sound of seemingly mystical words, which they could

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never make any sober person understand the sense of. Whereas, on the contrary, the words of our Saviour are not only intelligible, but penetrate into the very heart and soul of him that reads them. Every man bears witness to most of them in his own conscience: and the rest are such as plainly aim at the same end, to oblige and encourage us to be more strictly pious. And therefore he astonished all his auditors; who acknowledged an authority in his words greater than was in the discourses of the wisest men among them. They said, never man spake like him. Whole synagogues, as I have shown, wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. They inquired one of another, how a man could come by all that wisdom, who had no learned education. His adversaries were often silenced by his answers. They found themselves so nonplused that they durst not ask him any more questions, merely for fear of being more confounded. All which, and much more that might be said, is a sufficient evidence that he knew very well what he said, and understood his doctrine, and was a person of a clear reason; who could not be abused by the impostures of fancy and imagination.

X. And as for the other cavil, that possibly a man may suffer the illusion of evil spirits, which may make him confident without reason: let it be also granted, because the devil hath sometimes *transformed himself into an angel of light*, as the apostle St. Paul speaks[n]; and so might persuade men that God or an angel had spoken to them, or that they had visions and revelations from above; with which conceit he might so possess them, that they might be ready to take it upon their death, that they said nothing but the truth. But withal it is notoriously evident that such a person as our Saviour could not be liable to such diabolical impressions. For first, the holiness of his doctrine, which overthrows the devil's kingdom and authority, plainly shows how much he was in the favour of God. And secondly, his conquests over the devil when he assaulted him with his temptations, his turning him out of his possession every where, and making him acknowledge his authority, is an evident token how much superior he was to him, and so not obnoxious to his abuses. And thirdly, they who had been the followers of Jesus but a little while were too strong for the

[n] [2 Cor. xi. 14,]

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devil, and much above his power to hurt them: and therefore how could he himself be touched by him? They are St. John's words in this Epistle: *I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one*[o]. And again, the further his doctrine was propagated, the more was the kingdom of the devil overthrown, and all his cheats detected and discovered. As all impiety was plucked up by the roots, and godliness planted in the room of it; so all superstitious devices, all magic, all divination, wherewith he had long gulled and cozened the world and kept them in idolatry, were laid so naked and bare, that they were ashamed, and presently vanished. There is an excellent discourse concerning this in Athanasius his book concerning *the incarnation of the Word*[p]; which must not here be entirely transcribed, but only these few words of it: Τίς οὖν ἄρα καὶ πηλίκος ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ Χριστός; "Who then, let it be considered, and how great is this CHRIST, who, by his name and presence, obscures and abolishes all things every where; and alone prevails over all, and fills the whole world with his discipline? Let the Gentiles, that blush not to deride and laugh at us, tell me whether he be a mere man who does these things. If he be, why do they not blush to see one man stronger than all their gods? How comes he to demonstrate by his power that they are nothing? But if they will call him a magician, let them tell me again how it comes to pass that he destroys all magic, and doth not rather establish it."

He that can fancy all that I have now mentioned to have been done by the devil, which was so much to his prejudice, must, one would think, be possessed with some evil spirit himself. There is nothing can declare a man not to be deceived by the devil if this will not, that he is the very person who lays open all the devil's frauds, and discovers his wiles, and delivers men from all his subtle impostures. So did our Saviour; and therefore we may conclude, that, as he believed his doctrine even concerning himself to be true, so that was true which he believed; and that he was not deluded, either by his own private spirit, or by any else. And the truth is, his adversaries never took him for a vain enthusiast, or for a man that was ignorantly deceived; but still they accuse him as a

[o] 1 John ii. 14. [p] [§ 48. tom. i. p. 89 D.]

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subtle impostor, and would fain have had it thought that he craftily invented what he preached, to destroy their credit and establish his own. But this I have shown is incredible: for who could imagine that he should gain any credit and reputation by being put to death upon a shameful cross, into which he was not ensnared by their cunning, but foresaw and frequently foretold, and voluntarily offered himself to suffer it? Allow him but to be a man of common sense, and you must think he would not have contrived this way to procure fame, and to propagate his doctrine in the world; unless he had verily thought it to be so true, that his cross, which proved the laughter of the Gentiles and the stumblingblock of the Jews, could not hinder him from being honoured in the world as the Son of God. Nothing else could make him choose to die on this manner but his sincere belief of what he preached: and there being no cause in the world to suspect any thing of a melancholy proud imagination, or a diabolical illusion, that should impose upon him such a belief, it remains that our Saviour, by his very death, proved and confirmed the truth of what he preached. He first came by *water*, and then he came by *blood*. And as his *blood* proves he did not abuse us with that which he knew to be false; so the *water*, his holy doctrine and life, proves that he had no flaw in his understanding, nor was abused himself with any fancies or illusions, when he took himself to be so certainly the Son of God that he sealed it with his precious *blood*.

XI. And it ought to be considered also, that it was prophesied before by the holy men of God that their *Christ* should suffer, and be despised of men, and be in nothing more remarkable than in his sorrows. And therefore his *blood* was a sign to those who believed those prophecies that Jesus was the *Christ;* especially his blood so disgracefully shed; because he appeared hereby, as well as by other marks, to be the person whom all their inspired men pointed at and foretold should come to be their King. For the descriptions they have left of the cruel usage and horrible sufferings of the Messiah or Christ were answered to the life and exactly fulfilled in our Saviour Jesus, whose torments rather exceeded than fell short of the tragicalness of all their expressions. Thence it is that when he had ended all his sufferings he said, *It is finished;* and so

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bowed his head (i. e. did reverence to God) *and gave up the Ghost*[q], i. e. resigned his spirit to God in that prayer which St. Luke mentions. By which words, *It is finished,* he bade them mark that now all things that were written of him in Psalm xxii, Isaiah liii, and other places of their holy books, were perfectly fulfilled, and received such a punctual completion in him, that there remained nothing more to be done but only to die. He had done all his Father's will, and finished his whole work in every point; and so, having no further business here, he worshipped God that sent him, and departed the world to go to him.

XII. It will also much advantage this discourse to observe the accidents that happened at our Saviour's death, and accompanied his blood-shedding; which have no small force to verify what he said concerning himself. And, to omit the death of Judas, which prevented our Lord's, and declared that he thought Jesus innocent and himself guilty; together with several other things which may be better mentioned afterwards; let us only observe how the sun, contrary to its usual course, when the moon could not interpose itself between its light and them, was eclipsed three whole hours as he was in his passion[r]; and that in the conclusion of it, *the veil of the temple* (of that temple wherein the Jews so much confided) *was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*[s]*: the earth quaked, the rocks rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of saints which slept arose, and went out of the graves after his resurrection, and appeared unto many in the holy city*[t]. What judgment can any sober man make of so many strange things concurring at this moment? When was it ever heard that the sun blushed, as one may say, to show its face and look upon him, when any malefactor, or innocent man either, was hanged upon a gibbet? or that the holy place was torn together with that man's body? or that the earth groaned when he expired, and the hearts of rocks trembled when he cried out, and the monuments of the dead opened at his death, which three days after gave them life? All these things were peculiar to the death of Jesus, and never met together but only to honour his blood: and so notorious they were, that the centurion, and those who under

[q] John xix. 30. [r] Luke xxiii. 44, 45. [s] Matt. xxvii. 51. [t] Ver. 52, 53.

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him had the charge at that time to see the execution done, were convinced by them, and by the words that he spake, that he was no deceiver, but in truth the Son of God.

So St. Matthew there relates, that *when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this man was the Son of God*[u]. Whatsoever the Jews had decreed, they saw by the displeasure of the heavens, by the trembling of the earth, by the hand of God upon the temple (which was soon known by the priests), that Jesus had exceeding great wrong done him; having spoken nothing but the truth when he confessed to Pilate that he was the Son of God. They dreaded to think what would be the consequences of this horrid murder; and were sorely afraid that they themselves, who had attended upon it, should feel some of those tokens of God's wrath which elsewhere was very visible. But St. Mark tells us that the centurion also observed the words of our Saviour, as well as was struck with these miraculous accidents, and that they helped to convince him: *And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God*[x]. That is, when he heard him call God *Father*, (for those were the words, as you heard out of St. Luke[y], which he cried with a loud voice at the giving up of the ghost, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;*) and when he saw that he stood in this to the very last breath, that God was his Father; and also beheld such strange testimonies of it both in the heaven and in the earth; he said, Without all doubt he ought to have been acknowledged to be no less than he said, and not crucified as a malefactor. And St. Luke relates it thus, that Jesus crying with a loud voice, and saying those words before mentioned, *the centurion saw what was done* (that is, all spoken of in the precedent verses[z]), *and glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.* Which was as if he had said, God be praised for showing us the truth, or, Let us do God honour in acknowledging the truth, whatever come of it; I make no question but this man was inno-

[u] Matt. xxvii. 54. [x] Mark xv. 39. [y] Luke xxiii. 46.
[z] Luke xxiii. 44, 45, 46.

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cent, and said true when he affirmed he was God's Son; though the Jews have got him crucified for this saying, and brought us to wait upon his execution.

That, as I have often noted, was their quarrel with him, *that he, being a man, made himself equal with God*[a]. This was the blasphemy they accused him of, that he said, *they should see the Son of man* (that is, himself) *sitting at the right hand of power.* But the centurion, an honest Gentile, acquitted him of this crime; and, seeing the things that were done, and hearing the words he uttered, concluded him to be *righteous*, free from all blame, and not at all guilty of that blasphemy for which he was arraigned and suffered; but ought to have been believed and acknowledged as the *Christ*, the Son of the Blessed. Thus was that fulfilled which our Saviour had foretold[b], *When ye have lift up the Son of man* (upon the cross), *then shall ye know that I am he*, (that is, *the Christ*,) *and that I do nothing of myself*, (assume not this authority of preaching thus without God's leave,) *but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things;* that is, Even this, that I am his *Christ*, is that which he bid me affirm: *and he that sent me is with me* (to justify what I say and do): *the Father hath not left me alone*, (no, not upon the cross, nor after death, as appears even by this testimony which he forced the centurion to give him:) *for I do always those things that please him;* keep to my office, that is, both now and when I suffer you to *lift me up* to the cross: for God declared that he was never better *pleased* with him than when he laid down his life in this manner to testify to the truth.

XIII. Which was very much justified likewise by all that passed before this, from the time that the *Sanhedrim* had judged him worthy of death. In the whole process against him, before his condemnation to the cross, there were the plainest marks of his innocence; and it may justly be reputed a notable testimony to him, that their very charge against him cleared him; and that he who gave judgment upon him declared all along he did not deserve it: which will make it worthy our consideration, I think, if I give you as brief a relation as I can of all those passages which were preparatory to his

[a] John x. 33; v. 18. [b] John viii. 28.

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bloody death, after the chief priests had *bound him, and led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea:* who, as soon as he had examined him whether he was *the King of the Jews*, and received our Saviour's answer that he was[c], presently discerned that it was no earthly kingdom (as the Jews would have had him believe) to which he pretended, and that he did not at all intend to intrench upon the Roman rights: as you may see evidently, if you mind what follows this in St. Luke xxiii. 4: *Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.* This nettled them very much, to hear him pronounced innocent, whom they had judged guilty of the highest crime, and therefore they began with more than ordinary fierceness to endeavour to make good their charge; and said, *He stirred up the people* (to sedition, which was an argument, had it been true, that he affected a kingdom in this world which would have been prejudicial to Cæsar), *teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to Jerusalem*[d]. But Pilate so little believed that his doctrine tended to the raising sedition, that, to be rid of any further trouble, he lays hold on that word *Galilee*, where they told him he began to preach, and sent him to Herod the tetrarch of that country, who was at that time at Jerusalem[e]. But he was soon weary of the business, and remitted him back to Pilate, *arrayed in a gorgeous robe*[f], as much as to say, that he could determine nothing, but that he was a ridiculous monarch, a mock king, nothing else.

Being returned to Pilate, he received from him many testimonies of his innocence, (notwithstanding that he affirmed he was a *King*,) and Pilate devised by sundry means to deliver him; because, as he told them, neither he nor Herod could find any fault in him which should make him worthy of death[g]. First of all, he gives them their choice (but plainly showed that his inclinations were to dismiss Jesus), whether he should release him, or a notorious villain, who had committed murder in an insurrection[h]. And when they most ungratefully preferred that seditious murderer before him who had given life to so many among them, Pilate was disposed still to favour

[c] Matt. xxvii. 11. [d] Ver. 5. [e] Ver. 6, 7. [f] Ver. 10, 11.
[g] Luke xxiii. 13–15. [h] Ver. 17, 18, &c.

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him, by reason of an admonition he received from his wife (at this very instant, when he was set down again in the judgment seat), to have nothing to do in the condemnation of so righteous a Person, for she had *suffered so many things*, and been disturbed with such troublesome thoughts in her sleep about him, that she was confident he would suffer much if he were guilty of his death[i]. This startled him so much, that he laboured more than before to set him at liberty. He asked *them* indeed, which was unbecoming a judge, *what he should do with Jesus which is called Christ*[k]; as if his accusers, not he, were to determine his punishment: but yet he asked them also again and again, no less than three times, *Why, what evil hath he done?* for he protested he *found no cause of death in him*[l]. In which last place you may read, that having declared his innocence, he next of all contrived how to appease their blind rage, only by giving him the chastisement of scourging: which, St. John tells us[m], was bestowed on him; and that the soldiers also added some ridiculous ensigns of royalty, which they put upon him to expose him to the greater scorn, and made a mock proclamation, saying, *Hail, King of the Jews*[n]. This, Pilate imagined, would have given satisfaction to their wrath, and *therefore went forth again*[o], to let them *know that he found no fault in him*. But they might see that he had rendered him so contemptible, that nobody hereafter would follow him as their King: for he brought him forth in that ridiculous dress into which the soldiers had put him[p], and bid them look upon him, whether he was not despicable enough. That seems to be the meaning of those words that follow, *Behold the man!* See what a poor despicable person they have made him. You need not fear that such a man will do you any harm, for there is nothing of royal majesty in him more than this which you laugh at.

But they would not be content with this contempt which was put upon him; their malice was implacable, and nothing would suffice them but to have him crucified: which, at the instigation of the priests, was demanded by the rabble, who bawled as loud as ever they could, *saying, Crucify him, cru-*

[i] Matt. xxvii. 19. [k] Ver. 22. [l] Matt. xxvii. 23. Luke xxiii. 22.
[m] John xix. 1. [n] Ver. 2, 3. [o] Ver. 4. [p] Ver. 5.

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cify him[q]: as much as to say, Go on, sir, thou hast begun well: proceed to finish the execution. For *scourging* used to go before *crucifixion*, as St. Hierome observes upon St. Matthew xxvii: "It was appointed by the Roman laws, that they who were crucified should first be scourged." The Jews themselves who were taken in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, (five hundred commonly every day, sometimes more,) were first miserably lashed, and, as it were, crucified beforehand with great torments, and then fastened to a cross over against the wall of the city, as Josephus relates in his book of the Jewish war[r]. By a just judgment of God they themselves suffered that from the Romans, which they had made our Saviour suffer unjustly by the same hands: for they never left their yelling against him, and beseeching the governor not to leave off thus, till Pilate bid them do the rest themselves if they would, for he had rather it should be their act than his: *Take ye him,* saith he, *and crucify him; for I find no fault in him*[s]. One would think that the very manner of this speech was a sufficient declaration of the governor's mind; beside that he again repeats it, that he saw no pretence for the putting him to death. But yet they continue to press him with an obstinate violence to gratify their desires. And since they saw there was no good to be done, as we say, in this way wherein they had hitherto prosecuted him, they form a new indictment against him, and tell Pilate[t], that if he could not find him guilty of death, according to the Roman laws, yet *by their law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

This was to make a new process against him, and to forsake the former indictment, which accused him of treason against Cæsar. Now they make him guilty of treason against Almighty God, and seem to lay hold of a license which Pilate had given them before, to *take him, and judge him according to their law*[u], which pronounced the sentence of death upon him. But, as they add there, they had no power remaining among them to execute such a sentence; and therefore implore his favour to help them out, and to punish capitally this high crime of blasphemy, which, as things stood, they could only

[q] John xix. 6. [r] Lib. vi. c. 12. [s] Ver. 6. [t] Ver. 7. [u] John xviii. 31.

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condemn. And though they might be willing enough to understand his words, just now spoken, (when he said, *Take ye him, and crucify him,*) to be really meant for an enlargement of his former grant, and to give them liberty to execute their own sentence; yet it was more than they could do, they must be beholden to his power for it. They were extremely desirous, it appears by the story, to have him crucified for his greater disgrace; but this was a punishment proper only to the Gentiles, and never used among the Jews: and therefore, that they might neither act against the customs of their country, nor yet let him escape that ignominious punishment, they continue to beg of Pilate that he would pronounce the sentence of crucifixion upon him, and then command his soldiers to see it executed, for saying that he was *the Son of God*.

When Pilate therefore heard this, that he called himself *the Son of God*[u], (which the Jews took for blasphemy,) it put him into a greater fear than ever: he imagining, I suppose, according to the opinion of the Gentiles, that he might possibly be some son of Jupiter or Apollo, or some other of their deities. And therefore he went back again into the palace and asked our Saviour, *Whence art thou*[x]*?* To which our Saviour replied nothing; either because he was unworthy to hear, or uncapable to understand so weighty a truth. This put him into some indignation, for he asked him again with arrogance enough, *Dost thou not speak to me? knowest thou not who I am, and that I have power either to crucify thee or release thee*[y], which I please? To which he received such an answer as satisfied him[z], that whatsoever power he had he should abuse it, though not so much as the Jews did theirs, if he employed it to his condemnation. For *from thenceforth he laboured* more than before *to release him*[a], whose innocence, modesty, constancy, and contempt of death were so apparent. But being told that if he did it would be in effect to declare himself Cæsar's enemy, as you read in the same verse, he had not the courage to befriend our Saviour any longer, but resolves at last to sacrifice him to their rage, that he might save himself. For the very suspicion of a crime, he knew, had been

[u] John xix. 8. [x] Ver. 9. [y] Ver. 10. [z] Ver. 11. [a] Ver. 12.

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the ruin of divers persons with Tiberius, who would not want informers, he imagined, of what was now said. He thought it better therefore by the condemnation of an innocent person (such are the counsels of worldly wisdom) to preserve his interest in the emperor, and in the Jews, and perchance prevent a popular tumult, than hazard the loss of their favour and of the public peace, by preserving one who was poor and mean, and for whose death he was not like to be called to any account, nor incur any danger.

But yet (so pure and free from all spot was this Lamb of God) he would not pronounce the sentence against him till he had first in as public a manner pronounced him innocent, and washed his hands of his blood. For *he took water*, says St. Matthew, *and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it*[a]. This very *water*, as well as the other I have mentioned, was a witness to Jesus, that his very judge thought him guiltless, though he had openly confessed himself to be the Son of God. If it had been left to his free choice, he should have been acquitted, even by him that condemned him; he had such a regret in his mind, at that very time when he brought him forth to pass the sentence upon him, that he tries again if he could move those obdurate hearts from their cruel resolution, saying, *Behold your King*[b]*!* That is, Say what you will, this is your King, whom I am going, because you will not else be satisfied, to condemn. Or else this is spoken by way of upbraiding and derision, that they should make such ado about so poor a man as this, who had no power to do any harm if he had a mind. Why should they desire so eagerly and impatiently to be rid of him? If he was their King, how could they answer it? if he were not, what hurt could he do? But the former seems to be the sense of his words; for the Jews turned away their heads, and *cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him*[c]. As much as to say, This is none of our king, we have nothing to do with him; and therefore they would not have him trouble himself about their affairs any further than only to order him to be crucified. Let him not be so much concerned for them, or for their king; they would

[a] Matt. xxvii. 24. [b] John xix. 13, 14. [c] Ver. 15.

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look to themselves (as he had bidden them) and be content to bear all the blame, if their king were crucified. They did not desire any of the guilt should light upon him. No, for their part they declare they will perfectly acquit him, and take all upon themselves and theirs. So *all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children*[d].

And yet, as if he would vie with them in pertinacious resolution, (so sensible he was of his innocence,) he desires them once more to consider of the business, and not thus rashly destroy him whom they ought to preserve. What, says he, *Shall I crucify your King*[e]*?* To which the chief priests immediately returned such an answer as stopped his mouth, and made him not dare to speak one word more in his behalf. And indeed, it is a great wonder he had said so much, considering his natural disposition, which, if we may believe Philo[f], was so fierce and cruel, that he little regarded anybody, or cared what crimes he committed. Strange! that he should be so nice and tender in this point; so extremely unwilling to pass sentence on our Saviour, (a man that had not one friend appeared for him,) that nothing could make him do it till they reminded him of his duty to his master, saying, *We have* (i. e. acknowledge) *no king but Cæsar. Then,* as it follows in the very next words, *delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified*[g]. When he heard they still obstinately pretended respect to Cæsar, and would have him to be concerned in the case, he thought it was time to make an end, and give sentence that their new King should be crucified. For this at last was the crime for which he must suffer; *Pilate wrote a title,* (showing the cause of his death,) *and put it on the cross: and the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS*[h]. Which Pilate knew was false in the sense wherein they meant it, a king opposite to Cæsar; and therefore the words were so contrived that he might still express the opinion he had of him, and yet satisfy Cæsar too. To the very last he would give testimony to the innocence of Jesus, as far as he durst; and even then proclaimed him their King in several languages (an omen of the proclaiming it shortly in all countries) to their everlasting re-

[d] Matt. xxvii. 25. [e] John xix. 15.
[f] Legation. ad Caium. [tom. ii. p. 590.] [g] Ver. 16. [h] Ver. 19.

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proach, when he hung upon an infamous gibbet. And therefore they were not yet satisfied, because they saw themselves plainly indicted by this title, in the face of the world, as the murderers of their King; which made them renew their petitions to Pilate that he would alter the inscription, and not write *The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews*[i]. But now Pilate grew as obstinate as they, and gave them this short answer, *What I have written I have written*[k]: that is, Content yourselves; for the first writing shall stand, let the world make what they can of it. And there is no question but there was a divine providence in the business, that the cause of his death should be so expressed, as that the Jews should be openly condemned, and Jesus still cleared by Pilate; even after he had not only given sentence against him, but ordered it to be put in execution. All things concurred to justify him when his blood was shed. Which this very title declared was upon this account, to testify that he was their King; and told the world withal, that in the judgment of him who was his judge, he was no deceiver when he affirmed that he was their King, but the Jews villainous traitors, who had crucified that Person whom they ought to have honoured and obeyed.

XIV. For which the terrible vengeance of God followed them, and never left them till they had their own wish. His blood was required at their hands, and at the hands of their posterity. For they never thrive from that time forward; but decline more and more, till, about forty years after, their city was besieged by those whom they had importuned to crucify our Saviour, multitudes of them were crucified (as I told you before) in the face of all their brethren, far greater numbers were famished, Jerusalem and the temple at last destroyed, the people of the nation banished, and their children became vagabonds even to this day. For it was not very long before those very men who (when they said those words, *We have no king but Cæsar*) in the same breath had for ever renounced their Christ, and pronounced themselves rebels if they were not obedient to Cæsar, took up arms to deliver themselves from their subjection to him whom they really hated, though now to

[i] Ver. 21. [k] Ver. 22.

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serve a turn they courted and flattered. They who had rejected their true Christ and King, by whom they might have been restored to true liberty, were ready upon all occasions to run after those *false Christs*, (of whom our Saviour prophesied[l],) who by the promises of a false liberty led them into perdition. They could never be quiet till they had undone themselves, by provoking the only king whom they pretended to reverence to be the instrument of our Saviour, to make them the vilest slaves and the most miserable wretches upon the face of the earth. St. John lived to see the day of Jesus his *coming with power* to execute judgment upon them, and we see their wish still more and more accomplished upon their children. Who, as they never yet solemnly endeavoured to wipe off the guilt of his blood from them, by acknowledging the crime of their forefathers, (as the manner of former times was, we see in the examples of Nehemiah and Daniel,) so they continue to taste of the bitter fruits of this execrable treason against their sovereign Lord and King, Christ Jesus. By which you may see, that his blood, both upon the cross and upon their heads (by the heavy guilt it loaded them withal), is very fitly here alleged by St. John as a great witness that he was sent of God as his only Son. For Pontius Pilate himself did not wholly escape, but some of it lighted also upon his head. Though he was not so guilty, our Saviour confessed, as they who pursued him out of hatred, whereas he having no unkindness for him, delivered him to be crucified only out of fear; yet he felt the weight of this crime, and was oppressed himself, as our Saviour had been, by false accusations which the Samaritans brought against him. Whereupon he was deprived of the government of Judæa by Vitellius, then president of Syria: and having lost the authority which he abused in condemning our Saviour, he was required to go to Rome, and there answer the crimes that should be objected to him. There indeed he found Tiberius dead, but he did not live long after him. For he fell into so distressed a condition, that about the third year of the succeeding emperor Caius, ἐξ ἀνάγκης, (as Eusebius his word is[m],) he was constrained, either by the grievous afflictions he endured, or by the command of Cæsar;

[l] Matth. xxiv. 5, 24.

[m] Hist. Eccl. l. xi. c. 7.

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(which was an usual thing,) to become his own executioner, and punish himself with death for all the crimes he had committed.

But I shall not pursue either his or their story any further; it being time to put an end to this argument, which I shall conclude with these two observations.

1. First, that after our Saviour was dead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with his spear, *and forthwith came thereout water and blood,* as this very apostle hath recorded in the chapter so often mentioned[n]. Now some have from hence imagined, that he being the only evangelist that takes any notice of this, and setting a particular remark upon it, as a thing that *he saw and bears witness of*[o], it is most likely he hath some respect to that passage in his Gospel, and to the water and blood there mentioned, when he speaks of the *witness* of *water* and *blood* here in this epistle. For the water and blood which flowed out of his side were an argument of the truth of his humanity, which some wild heretics then denied, and testified also that he was truly dead, and not merely in appearance.

But it must be observed, that St. John is not here proving Jesus Christ to be a true man, consisting of body and soul like ours, and that his body and soul were so separated, that he was really dead; but something far greater and more excellent, viz. that he was God's Son: which the water and blood that came out of his side were no competent argument to prove. That water and blood therefore, if they have any relation to these witnesses here mentioned, were only emblems and adumbrations of these two grand proofs of our Saviour's being the Christ, viz. his purity and innocence which appeared in his whole preaching and life, to which the water bears a resemblance, and his constant confession of the truth even unto the death, which was lively represented by that blood. These two flowed from him with such force, that they have overspread the world with his faith; and *the knowledge of the glory of the Lord hath covered the earth, even like to the waters which cover the sea.*

2. The second observation is, that they who, by apostasy

[n] John xix. 34. [o] Verse 35.

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from the faith of Jesus, denied him to be *the Christ* after they had acknowledged it, are said to *tread under foot the Son of God*, and to *count his blood an unholy thing*[p]. Which expression could not be justified, if the apostles had not looked upon his blood as an unreprovable witness to him. For the meaning is, that those men who fell back to their old religion again, and deserted Christianity, made nothing of the testimony which God had given of his Son. As for his resurrection, they did not give any credit to that, though so strongly attested, but *trod under foot the Son of God*, as if he lay still in his grave: and as for his blood which was shed at his death, they looked upon that as if it were but common blood, (so the word *unholy* may be taken,) or rather as if it were the blood of a malefactor, which may be called impure and unholy. Which is the reason that he says they shall be judged worthy of sorer punishment than the contemners of Moses; because these men in effect made Jesus (who was infinitely greater than he) to be a mere impostor, a false prophet, and a blasphemer, who had done things worthy of the vilest death. They justified those that murdered him, and *crucified the Son of God afresh*, (as it is in a parallel place[q],) by disowning him and denying that he was *the Christ*. For this was to acknowledge that he was justly put to death for taking upon him that office: and that if he were upon earth again, they saw no reason why they should not treat him as the Jews had done. This was the sense of every Christian's apostasy; it renewed the charge of imposture against Jesus, and *put him*, as the apostle there speaks, *to open shame*. They did as bad as publicly declare him to be a deceiver; and that he deserved to lose his life in that infamous manner wherein he suffered upon the cross. For which cause such vilifiers of Jesus deserved to partake in that *judgment and fiery indignation*, which he says was ready *to devour the adversaries*[r], that is, those who actually crucified Christ, and now persecuted his servants: for they had his blood in the same contempt, and made no more of it than of the blood of one of the thieves that were crucified with him.

Now from hence it follows, that his blood testified his innocence, (as I have shown,) and was looked upon by others, as

[p] Heb. x. 29. [q] vi. 6. [r] Verse 27.

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well as by St. John, to be a witness that he was the Son of God. Else they could not have been guilty of so great a crime, and fallen under such an heavy punishment, who despised his blood, and were no more moved by it than if it had been common, like the blood of other men; nay, relinquished him, as if his blood had been profane, like that of the malefactors who suffered with him. This was their condemnation, that they cast such a vile reflection on that blood, which heretofore they thought so powerful, that *thereby they were sanctified;* that is, persuaded to devote themselves to his service, as the only means to obtain remission of their sins, which they had by his blood. This is a sign that they looked upon it once, not only as a thing most sacred, but also most powerful to make men believe in Jesus. And this increased the sin and guilt of dishonouring his blood by apostasy; because it was of great authority and force to draw men to the faith, and to preserve them in it: which, by forsaking the faith it confirmed, they made to be of no efficacy nor consideration at all.

Moses his covenant and law were sealed only *by the blood of bulls and goats,* and yet those men *suffered death without mercy,* as the apostle here observes, who either fell away to other gods, or did any thing presumptuously in contempt of his precepts. By which we may judge, says he, what they are like to suffer (a much sorer punishment sure) who renounce the Christian religion, which was confirmed by a much greater person, and by a more noble blood, even by the blood of the Mediator of this better covenant: who did more than Moses ever thought of to attest what he delivered, and to prove that he came from God, and that all his promises should be made good (for he sealed them with his own blood); and therefore might justly expect that men should prove more faithful to him, and remain firmer in his obedience, at least not be so presumptuous as to despise him by reproaching his precious blood. Now if his blood was not an argument to induce men to believe, and to continue in the state of Christianity, they could not be charged with such disrespect to it when they left this religion, nor be punished for the undervaluing or rather scorning that which was of no force to tie them to the faith. But if they were guilty of great contempt of it, and were to suffer sorely, extreme sorely upon this account, that they gave no more

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reverence to his blood; then we ought to conclude the apostles thought it of great efficacy to engage their belief, and make them constantly adhere to Christ, by the witness that it bare to him. Which testimony, together with the rest, those apostates plainly rejecting, they became liable to a far heavier condemnation than any formerly could fall into, for affronting Christ, and all those who were his witnesses. In short, they who did not look upon his blood as holy must condemn him for a malefactor. But they that did confess the sacredness of it, which appears many ways, must needs acknowledge him not to have been a criminal, as the Jews pretended, but the *Son of God*, as at his death he professed himself.

A PRAYER.

I do again acknowledge thee, O blessed Jesus, to be the Son of God most high. I behold thy glory shining through the blackest cloud of thy shameful sufferings. Then thou appearedst to be the chosen of God, even when thou wast scorned and rejected of men. Great was the splendour of thy Majesty, under the mockery of a crown of thorns, and under the reproach of the cross itself. And great was thy love, O thou lover of souls, who wouldst shed thy own most precious blood to work and confirm thy faith in our hearts, that believing on thee, we *might have life through thy name.* O how expensive was thy love, which never thought it had done enough, till thou hadst assured our hearts by giving thyself for us! How infinitely are we indebted to thee, who hast so dearly purchased our eternal joy with thy most bitter sorrows! I ought to have the greater regard to all that thou hast said, either concerning thyself, or concerning the obedience I owe thee, or the happiness thou hast promised me; because thou hast sealed all in so sacred a manner, and chosen to die that thou mightest bear witness to thy truth.

For this end thou camest into the world, and hast honoured thyself with the name of the *true and faithful Witness, the beginning of the creation of God;* who hast shown us the path of life, by thy bloody and most ignominious death. O that none of us who are called by thy name may ever prove so base and unworthy, so ungrateful and disrespectful to thee, so insensible or forgetful of thine amazing goodness, as to forsake that course which thou thyself hast begun, and into which thou hast led us by thine own example! Let none of us prove unlike thee, who art the beginner and the finisher of our faith. Let us never degenerate from the original from whence

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we come; nor dishonour the very Author of what we are, by actions unworthy of his children. But be pleased graciously both to excite and assist our pious endeavours to follow thee, and to witness a good confession, as thou hast done, at least in our lives and conversation. That they may testify to all how much we reverence thee, by our observance of thy commands; and justify the truth of thy word, that thy yoke is easy and thy burden light, by our cheerful, free, and ready observance of them. And if thou wilt have us to witness a good confession also by our blood, or by parting with any thing that is as dear unto us, for thy name's sake; O that we may then imitate thee, the true and faithful witness, by continuing faithful to thee unto death! Let no soul of us ever faint in our mind, much less draw back for fear of any thing that may befal us: but still go on, and courageously meet whatsoever opposes us in our way to heaven. Help us *to stand fast in the faith*, to *quit ourselves like men*, and *to be strong*, as becomes thy faithful servants and soldiers, who have vowed to be true to thee unto our lives' end.

O blessed Jesus, who can think that he does or endures too much for thee? Who can complain of thy service, or repine at the sufferings it may require, when he thinks of thy labour and pains to secure our hope in God of an eternal redemption from all miseries and troubles, and from all sin the cause of them, by shedding thy own most holy blood? We are unworthy to bear the name of thy servants, if we should be so ungrateful to thy memory as not to celebrate that love with perpetual praises and thanksgivings. And how fearfully shall we reproach ourselves if we continue to commemorate it, and yet grudge to deny any thing for thy sake, or behave ourselves as if we would renew thy sufferings by our continued sins? Far be it from any of us to think any thing so dear to us as truth and righteousness; that holy truth which thou hast delivered to us. O that we may read with such an affection the whole history of thy love, and all the laws thou hast left to govern us, and the gracious grants thou hast made us, as if we saw them written in thy most precious blood! by which thou hast testified the greatness and sincerity of thy love, and assured us of the truth of thy word, and consecrated thyself also to be a merciful and faithful High Priest; who canst have compassion on us, and ever succour and relieve us when we are tempted as thou wast. And may we be so sensibly affected herewith, as to depend on thy intercession with the stronger faith; and with greater care and diligence tread in those steps which thou hast in such a manner marked out to us; and persist in them so steadfastly, that none of the terrors of this world may make us step aside, and turn from thy commandments.

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Give us grace, O blessed Lord, in the worst condition, to express that resolution, that undaunted resolution, that constancy, that confidence in God, that zeal for his honour and glory, that charity towards our enemies, that humble resignation, and that patient meekness, which appeared in thee under thy greatest sufferings. Arm us with the very same mind and spirit which we see in thyself. That we who believe in a Saviour who abased and humbled himself so low, who was so content to be poor and little regarded, to bear all the slanders and scorn, as well as the cruel torments which the malice of men could inflict upon him, may not be proud and insolent, covetous and ambitious, impatient of pain, or a little disparagement; but constantly endeavouring to conform ourselves to thy glorious pattern which we have before us, may rejoice in that faithful saying, that *if we be dead with thee, we shall also live with thee; if we suffer, we shall also reign with thee.* Amen.

Now unto the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen [z].

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the third witness upon earth, the Spirit.

THERE is one *Witness* more that remains still to be examined, whose testimony was notorious and very well known, for it was *upon the earth:* viz. that of the SPIRIT. In the *sixth* verse St. John brings it in after the other two I have now treated of; though in the eighth verse it be set before them. And here he adds this illustrious character of it, which is not given to the two former, *it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the Truth.* Which is not to be understood as if the other two were not *Witnesses,* for they are called so expressly in this eighth verse; or as if they were not *truth,* for I have abundantly proved that they are. But this mark is set upon the *Spirit,* to denote it to be the most eminent witness of the three,—*the* witness, or *that* witness; that

[z] [Rev. i. 5, 6.]

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which excels the other two in clearness and notoriousness; that which was always accounted most powerful to prove a truth; that against which nothing can be objected but with the greatest impudence and impiety; that which adds greater strength and force unto the other two, and together with them makes up a most complete demonstration. For whatsoever defect any one may think is in the witness of the *Water* and of the *Blood* alone, the *Spirit* perfectly supplies it, and proves beyond all doubt that a person who so lived and so died must needs be *the Son of God.*

Now by the *Spirit* we are not to understand either the descent of the Spirit of God upon our Saviour at his baptism, or the pouring of it upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, or any thing of like nature; for this was the testimony of the *Holy Ghost,* and that from *heaven.* But we are to understand thereby, first, the *miracles, wonders* and *signs,* which were wrought by him before he died; and secondly, his more wonderful *resurrection* to life again, after he was crucified, dead and buried. I will not be too confident, but I think there is a plain difference, which is not observed, between the *Holy Ghost* and the *Spirit,* in the phrase of the New Testament. By the *Holy Ghost* seems commonly to be meant, the gifts of tongues, of prophecy, of knowledge, of wisdom, of revelation, and such like. Whereas by the *Spirit,* when it is used alone, or in distinction from the other, is generally meant, the power of miracles, of healing diseases, casting out devils, feeding multitudes with very little food, and suchlike wonders. For we read that the *Holy Ghost was not* given while our Saviour lived [a]. And yet even then the apostles had the power of casting out devils, and healing all manner of diseases; which was a portion of that *Spirit* which our Saviour had *without measure,* but was not the *Holy Ghost.* Thus St. Peter says our Lord was anointed with the *Holy Ghost and with power* [b]. Where by *power* is meant something distinct from the *Holy Ghost;* even that which is here called *Spirit,* a faculty of doing wonders; as the other signifies a faculty of knowing the heart, of declaring the mind of God, of foretelling things to come, of prophesying, and opening all the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

[a] John vii. 39. [b] Acts x. 38.

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And thus I am sure it signifies in the Old Testament; where, when the *Spirit of the Lord* is said to come upon Othniel[c], upon Gideon[d], upon Samson[e] (as I may have occasion to note more largely upon another occasion), there is nothing intended of the Holy Ghost, or any gift of declaring God's mind that was then bestowed on them: but they were then only made valorous and courageous, and were endued with great strength to achieve wonderful things above the power of man. And indeed in this consists one principal difference between the *Holy Ghost* and the *Spirit;* that the former consecrated men to the office of interpreting God's mind; but the latter did not, making them only valiant (as in those three now mentioned), or fit for the government of God's people, as in the case of Saul. All which is said briefly to show what we are here to understand by the *Spirit*, viz. all the wonderful things that our Lord *did*, and all that were *done* for him upon the earth. For, whatsoever may be thought of the rest, there is no doubt of this, that when the *Holy Ghost* and the *Spirit* are thus distinguished, as they are here by St. John (the one being a witness in heaven, the other on earth), *Spirit* must be taken in this limited and restrained signification.

I.

And first, I say, *all that he did;* as his cleansing the poor lepers; opening the eyes of the blind; curing of the palsy, bloody flux, and indeed all manner of sickness and disease; commanding the wind and the sea to be obedient to him; walking upon the water; feeding many thousands with a few loaves and fishes, making an hundred times more fragments than there was meat; casting out of devils; and raising of the dead: all these were notable witnesses to Jesus; and hereby the *Spirit* bare record that he was the Son of God. The prophet Isaiah foretold that he, being *God's beloved, in whom his soul was well pleased*, would appear in this manner; for God, he says, would put his *Spirit* upon him. This St. Matthew takes notice of[f], and applies to Jesus, just after he had cured a man who had his hand withered; which shows what he understood by the *Spirit*. And our Lord himself also expounds the meaning

[c] Judges iii. 9. [d] vi. 34. [e] xiii. 25; xiv. 6. [f] x. 18.

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of it in the following verses: for after the recital of that prophecy of Isaiah, the Evangelist relates immediately how he healed a man *possessed with a devil, blind and dumb*[g]; which the Pharisees spitefully ascribing to the power of the devil, and not of God, he confutes them by this argument, that then the devil would pull down his own kingdom. What men of sense could imagine him to be so foolish? he was not yet so blind as the Pharisees were; who ought to have concluded from these miraculous works, that if he *by the Spirit of God cast out devils* (as it could be by nothing else, according to the argument now named), then it was apparent *the kingdom of God was come unto them*[h]. Here he both tells us what the *Spirit* signifies, viz. such a power as this of casting out devils; and also what was the end of giving the *Spirit*, viz. that they might know the Messiah and his kingdom was come. And whom could they take to be their *King* but he who appeared anointed with such a *Spirit*, and who communicated the same power unto others?

For this was an evident demonstration that the voice was no empty sound which said, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;* and that it was no deception, when John the Baptist thought he saw the *Spirit* descend and remain upon him. It was plain by this that indeed he was very dear to God, and that he had a divine power residing and dwelling in him, which proved him to be as great as that voice proclaimed him. That there was a mighty power in him, his sworn enemies could not deny. The very accusation of magic, which we find to this day in the Jewish books against him, does us this service; that it is an open acknowledgment there were such miraculous things done as are recorded in the Gospel story. Which being granted, it is apparent the power that wrought them was divine, and that there was nothing of the devil in the business, by our Saviour's argument in the place now named. For how could the devil be supposed to assist in such operations, unless we will conceive him to have so little wit as to contrive the most effectual way to overthrow all his own authority? The very end for which our Saviour dispossessed devils, and did all other miraculous cures, was to win honour to God; whereas the devil, in all that he doth, hath

[g] Matt. x. 22. [h] Ver. 28.

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the quite contrary drift. If we should suppose with the Pharisees that he hath sometimes suffered himself to be commanded by his copartners, it hath ever been with the same design that cunning gamesters have, who permit a mere bungler to beat them a set or two, only to draw them in to play for a greater stake. He never gives way to any of his friends, or seems to be afraid of their authority over him, but it is to bring men to an acknowledgment of his power, or to seduce them to the performance of some magical services to him: whereas our Saviour demanded no other reward for all his charitable cures but this alone, that they whom he had thus obliged should thank God, and give him glory, and sin no more.

To this purpose Origen admirably discourses, in the latter end of his first book against Celsus[h]: "It is senseless to think that any of his miracles were done by magic; for there never was any magician that called men to the forsaking of the devil and all idolatry, and persuaded them to amend their lives in good earnest. They never instructed them in the fear of God by all their wonderful tricks, nor taught those that saw them so to live as those that are to be tried and judged by God. This is none of their business: they neither can nor will carry on such a design, nor have any thing to do with the amendment of mankind; being themselves full of all filthiness, and swarming with the most abominable vices. But he, who by all the wonderful things he did called the spectators to the correction of their manners and the amendment of their lives, propounded himself also, not only to his familiar disciples, but to all others *παράδειγμα ἀρίστου βίου*, 'a pattern and example of the best and most excellent life;' that so both his disciples might be instructed to teach men the will of God, and others, being taught by his word and manners, more than by his miracles, how to live, might have respect to nothing else in all they did but how to please God. Now if the life of Jesus was such as this, what man of sense is there that can compare him with magicians, and not rather believe him to be God appearing in an human body, *ἐπ' εὐεργεσίᾳ τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν*, 'to be a benefactor to mankind,' and bestow the greatest blessings on us?"

[h] [§ 68. tom. i. p. 383.]

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But, because this argument is very large, let us draw it into a narrower compass, and take particular notice only of these two sorts of miraculous works, *casting out of devils*, and *raising the dead*.

I. As for the former, the *casting of devils* out of a number of distracted and mad or melancholy people, whose depraved imaginations were ofttimes furiously moved by the power of evil spirits; it is the more remarkable, because it declares he had as great a power over the invisible world as they saw him have over the bodies of men, and over the waters, the winds, and things growing upon the earth; all which yield some examples of his miraculous works. Who could this be but the Lord of angels and men and all other things, who commanded the prince of the power of the air and all his legions, and they could not resist him? Was it not an argument that *God was with him*, as St. Peter speaks, when no created power whatsoever could withstand him? For you may observe further, (2) that there were no kind of devils which did not presently give place when he required them to come out. There might have been some colour, as Athanasius well observes[i], to say he cast out devils by Beelzebub, if he had not expelled all, though never so numerous, and never so outrageous. The prince of devils might have been supposed to have had power over the lesser fry: but since it was apparent that πᾶσα τῶν δαιμόνων μανία, 'all the fury and madness of demons' fled before him, at the very mention of his name, we must confess that our Lord and Saviour was no demoniacal power, but the very Son of God, the Word (as he speaks), the Wisdom, and the Power of the Father. Nay, (3) he not only expelled them himself, but gave his twelve apostles authority to cast them out; thereby showing he came to deliver men from the dominion of the devil, in that he gave the meanest men such power over him. *Go ye*, says he, *and preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give*[k]. This was long before they received the *Holy Ghost*, presently after they were called into his attendance, and therefore was a portion of the *Spirit*, which testified their *Christ* or *King* was not

[i] De Incarn. Verbi. [§. 48. tom. i. p. 90.]

[k] Matt. x. 7, 8.

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far off, but would shortly visit them. For they were sent to prepare the people for him, as seventy-two disciples more were afterward, though with a less portion of the *Spirit* than the twelve apostles had. For when he sent them with the same commission to preach that the other had, we read of no other power given them but to *heal the sick* in every city whereinto they came[k]. But they were possessed with such an high opinion of the power of their Master who sent them, that they adventured further, and in his name *cast out devils*, as well as healed sick people: for when they returned back to give him an account, they tell him, with no small joy, *Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name*[l].

Which might well have such power, though they had no particular authority given them to cast out devils by it, since it was very terrible to them, (you may observe further,) (4) when pronounced by those who were not of our Saviour's company. So St. Mark relates[m], that St. John brought a report to him of a man whom they had seen casting out devils in his name, and yet was none of his followers; for *we forbad him*, says he, *because he followeth not us*. To which Jesus replies, that there was no cause to prohibit him; for this must needs prove a convincing argument to the man himself, if not to others, that he was *the Christ*. *There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me*[n]. Of this sort they seem to have been to whom our Saviour appeals when the Pharisees accused him of confederacy with Beelzebub. That is strange, saith he; did you ever hear of a devil cast out in the name of any magician? In my name there is, even by those who are more related to you than they are to me: let them therefore determine this matter. That seems to be the sense of those words, *By whom then do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges*[o]. There are those who are none of my disciples, but yours, that use my name for the casting out of devils, who immediately fly before them. What do you think of them? do they deal with Beelzebub? I know you will not pass such a judgment on your own disciples, and therefore this fact of theirs condemns your partiality, and proves my divine virtue.

[k] Luke x. 9. [l] Ver. 17. [m] Mark ix. 38. [n] Luke x. 39. [o] Matt. xii. 27.

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Nay, the devils themselves, we find, (5) were so astonished at this power which they felt in his name, that thereupon they acknowledged him to be the Christ. For that is their meaning when they confessed him to be the *Holy One of God*[p]. And so St. Luke expounds it, *The devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God*[q]. And (6) the most unprejudiced people, who would not be worse than devils, took this miraculous work of the Spirit to be an argument of it. *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him: insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David*[r]*?* By that name they called their King, whom they expected with the power of working more miracles than any prophet before had done[s]. And therefore (7) when Cornelius and his company were desirous to hear of St. Peter *all things that were commanded him of God*[t], he refers them to this in the first place, (after he had mentioned his being anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power,) as an argument why they should believe in Jesus, that *he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.* And he offers himself, together with others, as *witnesses of all things that he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem:* which were the more wonderful, I must add, (8) in the last place, because he was a person of such mean education. Nothing like to Moses in this, who was bred up in Pharaoh's court, and acquainted with all the learning of the Egyptians. But Jesus was bred up privately and in an homely manner, having no advantages at all from a liberal institution: which was the cause that the people of his own country, who knew how he had been trained up, *were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things*[u]*?* That is, Do not we know him and all his kindred? How comes he to be wiser and more powerful than they? His parentage is poor; his breeding was in a car-

[p] Mark i. 24. [q] iv. 41. [r] Matt. xii. 23. [s] John vii. 31.
[t] Acts x. 33. [u] Matt. xiii. 54-56.

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penter's house; he never learnt of any of the doctors and masters in Israel; nor was otherways disciplined than we ourselves; where then did he learn his skill? and who gave him this power?

This was a just cause of astonishment, but none at all of offence, as St. Matthew in the following words, tells us it proved [w]. That which made them stumble should have rather drawn them to him, and wrought faith in them; when they saw such wonderful things done, and such excellent things said, by one that could not have them unless it were from God. It could be no part, they might easily think, of the devil's craft, to dispossess himself; and therefore they ought to have concluded that he was the enemy of the devil; and indeed the destroyer of him whom God promised to send into the world. And so they would have concluded, had not their eyes been blinded with the splendour and pomp of this world, and with the love of riches, and such like things: which made them readier to follow a man that by the force of arms, and their assistance, promised to subdue the Roman legions, than him who, by one word speaking, thy saw could cast out legions of devils: which naughty temper of mind is that which still prejudices men against the faith, and makes their hearts indisposed to receive Christianity. They prefer the world before God, and love their bodies better than their souls: otherwise they would find themselves inclined to believe in the name of Christ. If they considered what God is, what honour is due unto him, and what it is that will make a soul truly happy, and desired this above all other things, they would presently see that none ever glorified God so much as our Saviour; none so plainly taught the world what worship, honour and observance is to be given to him; none ever so contrived the improvement and happiness of our immortal spirits: and so they would be disposed to hearken with due reverence and serious attention to what these witnesses say concerning him. Nay, did they but prudently consult the good of their bodies only, and had respect not merely to their present satisfaction, but to their perpetual felicity, it would certainly provoke them to examine carefully the testimony which God hath given him; because he promises to *change* these *vile bodies*, and make them *glorious*,

[w] Matt. xiii. 57.

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by that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. And there is not the least reason to doubt of his power now that he is in heaven, since it was so miraculous while he was here upon earth, that he frequently raised the dead: which is the second thing of which I am to speak a few words.

II. And there is nothing of this kind like to that of Lazarus his rising to life again, after he had been dead four days, and was already so far putrified, as his friends thought, that they dissuaded our Saviour from having his tomb opened, lest it should prove offensive and noisome to him. For with this St. John concludes all that he had to say of our Saviour's miraculous works; there being nothing that could be thought of beyond it. For it never entered into the mind of any man to think, that a person really dead, as Lazarus undoubtedly was, could be restored to life by any power but that which gives us life, the power of Almighty God. And therefore our Lord plainly designed this, as the last thing he could do for their satisfaction while he was on earth, to prove that he was the *Son of God.* Else Lazarus had not died, but he would have gone and prevented it, as he did in many other cases. For when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he would not stir from the place where he was, notwithstanding the love he had both for him and for his two sisters. So St. John observes when he tells us, *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place were he was*[x]. This is a strange reason for his making no more haste, being at a great distance also from him. One would think that he should have said, Therefore he began his journey presently into Judea, that he might come time enough to save him whom he loved. But he resolved the quite contrary, *because the Son of God was to be glorified by this sickness*[y]. Therefore he stayed so long before he would move towards him, that Lazarus might be dead before he got to Bethany, and he might get more glory by his resurrection than he had done by healing so many sicknesses, and casting out such a number of devils. For this proved that he had power not only to break, but utterly *to destroy the works of the devil,* and to tread him quite under foot, who had the *power of death.*

[x] John xi. 5, 6. [y] Ver. 4.

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For which reason he tells his disciples that he was glad for their sakes that he was not there when Lazarus died, *to the intent that they might believe*[z]: have their faith, that is, more confirmed in him, by seeing such an illustrious miracle wrought upon Lazarus after he was dead, than it could have been by healing his sickness and preserving him from death. They had seen many desperate diseases cured, but never any man raised to life after he had been so long dead. Some of the Jews indeed objected this to him, that he ought to have been so kind as to have saved his friend's life, if he had had the power which he pretended. *Could not this man,* say they, *which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died*[a]? They do not by these words express their faith, but their unbelief; and upbraid him with weakness or want of love. The latter could not be imputed to him; for by his tears, just before mentioned[b], they all observed how much he loved him. But from thence some of the company took occasion to disparage his power, and to ask the rest of their neighbours, how they could believe that he had opened a blind man's eyes (as was commonly reported, chap. ix.), when he suffered one whom he loved so much to want his help and perish? If he had done the former, how easy had it been for him to do the latter! In which he failing, though his affection could not but move him to do his utmost for his friend, they took it to be a demonstration that he was not such a mighty man as the people imagined. This perverse reasoning moved our Saviour very much, so that he *groaned again in himself*[c] to see their deplorable obstinacy and malice; as much as he had done before[d] to hear their piteous lamentations which they made for the dead. These men's condition was far more piteous; because he foresaw there was but little hope that they would be moved, when they saw their frivolous cavil answered by the resurrection of Lazarus: which would show there was good reason why he let him die; that he might express never the less love to him, but more to them and to all mankind by restoring his life, which was a more divine work by much than to have saved him from death.

To this therefore he immediately applies himself, and bids

[z] John xi. 15. [a] Ver. 37. [b] Ver. 35, 36. [c] Ver. 38. [d] Ver. 33.

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the sister of the deceased, whose faith it seems began to stagger, not doubt but she should *see the glory of God*[e]; such a stupendous instance, that is, of the power of God in him, as would move many to give glory to God that sent him. For wherein could the majesty of God appear more to their astonishment than in such a marvellous work as this? which when he entered upon he first lift up his eyes to him and called him *Father*; on purpose that the people might believe he came from God and was his Son, when they saw him answer his prayers in this manner[f]. Where, if you read the place, you will see he gives this reason why he made a public acknowledgment to God for hearing him so often: not because he doubted of his presence with him now; but merely that the bystanders might know by whom he did such miracles, and, ascribing them to no other power but his, might believe that he had sent him. What should they believe else, when they heard him, after this address to God, commanding Lazarus with *a loud voice* (expressing his assurance and authority) to come forth: and when they beheld him who could not lately move himself in his bed, rise up out of his tomb, and walk about, not only restored to life, but in perfect health? This struck the hearts of many of the Jews who were there present so powerfully that *they believed on him*[g]; that is, concluded he was more than a *prophet*, no less than the *Messiah* himself. And those cavillers before mentioned, who still persisted to maintain their infidelity by the absurdest imaginations, were so startled at it, that they went presently and told some of the great Sanhedrim what Jesus had done; wishing them, I suppose, to look to themselves, and not suffer these proceedings[h]. For they were so alarmed with this news, that a council forthwith is called, and they enter into a solemn debate what course to take with him; seeing plainly how powerful this miracle was to win him proselytes, and draw the people to him[i]. It had had that effect upon many already, as you have heard: and they were afraid it would increase the number of his disciples so much, that it would prove their utter ruin. For they say, *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation*[k]; that is, the

[e] John x. 40. [f] Ver. 41, 42. [g] Ver. 45. [h] Ver. 46. [i] Ver. 47. [k] Ver. 48.

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people will proclaim him their king, and thereby we shall incur the indignation of Cæsar: who will send an army, and cut us off, till he leave neither *root* nor *branch* (as it is Mal. iv. 1), but destroy both us and our temple. That *place* they were resolved to preserve, though it were with his destruction: whose death they now determine, as soon as ever they could catch him. For so their consultation ended; first, they decreed [l] that for the public good, as they called it, he should be put to death; and then, that if any *knew where he was* [m] they should give notice of it, that he might be apprehended in order to his trial. Thus their blind malice turned the most powerful means of their conversion into the ground and reason of his destruction. For because he did so many miracles [n], they did not think it fit to let him live; when as for that very cause they ought to have believed on him, and thought him worthy to live eternally. For I think these three things are very considerable, wherewith I shall conclude this part of the *Spirit's* testimony.

I. First, this miracle wrought upon Lazarus was so evident a token that he was the Son of God, that it had in it all the conditions which the Gentile king, whom the Jews speak of in the book *Cosri* [o], requires in a prodigy; sufficient to persuade men to believe that God speaks by him that works it. "Our mind," says he, "cannot be brought to think that God enters into society with flesh and blood, unless it be by such a miracle whereby the nature of things is inverted: so that it appears it could not have been done by any power, but only by his who is the Author of nature, and made all the things we see out of nothing at all. And secondly, this miracle must not be wrought in secret; but, to gain belief, it must be done before the eyes of a multitude; who may see it, and be satisfied of the truth of it. And lastly, diligent inquiry must be made, and it must be examined strictly; that no doubt may be left in men's minds, but they may be fully satisfied it is no fancy, nor done by any trick or subtle imposture. Now if we consult this history of Lazarus, we shall find there is none of these wanting to settle the most doubtful mind in the belief of our Saviour's almighty power and authority. For to raise the dead is a work that exceeds all natural powers. There is none that can

[l] John xi. 53. [m] Ver. 57. [n] Ver. 47. [o] Part. 1. sect. 8. [p. 13.]

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restore life, as has been said already, but he who at the first gave it. So much the Jews themselves acknowledge; who have a common saying, that the *key of the grave* is one of the *four* keys which is kept in the hands of the Lord of the world alone. לא למלאך ולא לשרף, 'Neither to angel, nor to seraph,' (as the Jerusalem Targum [p] speaks upon Gen. xxx. 22), that is, neither to lowest, nor the highest of the celestial ministers is this power given: but it is reserved to him only that made them and all things else.

Now that our Saviour indeed raised a dead man, there were many witnesses, as you heard before from John xi. 45, where it is said, that *many of the Jews which came with Mary, and had seen these things which Jesus did, believed on him.* And the fame of it was so great, that it drew a greater concourse of people thither to be satisfied of the truth of the report. For he tells us, *that much people* (i. e. a multitude) *of the Jews came to that place, not for Jesus his sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead*[q]. Nay, the Pharisees, as I told you, had the news of it brought to them by some that were present, *and had seen the things which Jesus did*[r]; who were curious enough, no doubt, to inquire into the business; and had satisfied themselves that indeed he was dead, laid in his grave, and continued in that state till, according to the course of nature, he must begin to turn to corruption and stink. Which was all that needed any proof; for that he was now alive their eyes were witnesses. And therefore they could not deny this miracle [s]. But to extinguish the light, and take away the convincing power of it; they thought it was best to remove Lazarus out of the way, and to put him to death as well as our Saviour: for the sight of him converted a great many, as you read, xii. 10, 11: *The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.* It was a thing confessed then, that this wonderful work had been done. There was the testimony of the man himself, and of his sisters, and of our Saviour's disciples, and of *many of the Jews, who were come to comfort Martha*

[p] [p. 18. ed. Lat. per F. Tayler, 4to. Lond. 1649.]
[q] John xii. 9.
[r] ix. 46.
[s] Ver. 47.

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and Mary concerning their brother[t]. Insomuch that not long after, our Saviour coming to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, *much people went forth to meet him,* and brought him in with a triumph due only to so great a person, saying, *Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord*[u]. And if you would know what excited them to meet him, it was the fame of this miracle, which the eyewitnesses of it had brought to them; as you read there[x]: *The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.*

Here, it is visible, were two troops or companies, both called *much people:* one of which went from Jerusalem to Bethany to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead[y]; the other met Jesus the next day as he was coming from Bethany to Jerusalem[z]: for they had been informed by those who were present at the time when it was done, that for certain Lazarus was raised from his grave by the word of Jesus; and now they were confirmed in this belief by the company that went to Bethany the day before to inquire of it, who testified to these that came to meet him, that they found it to be an undoubted truth that he had been really dead and now was alive again, by no other means but those words of his, *Lazarus, come forth;* which might well make them all acknowledge him to be their *King,* who was come unto them *in the name of the Lord,* as appeared by this miraculous work, which none but the hand of Heaven could effect. What heart would not be moved to bow to him who had such power over quick and dead? who could think him to be less than the Lord of all, who they saw was the Lord of life? None but proud ambitious Pharisees, who were afraid they should lose as much authority as he got. These were more startled than ever to see such crowds of people flock after him to do him honour, and to hear them applaud him as the great *Son of David,* and follow him with their *hosannas in the highest.* This made them despair of blasting his fame and discrediting him with the people as long as he lived; and therefore they grew the more resolved

[t] John xi. 19. [u] xii. 12. [x] Ver. 17, 18. [y] Ver. 9. [z] Ver. 12, 13.

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to hasten the execution of their decree against him, that he should be put to death. For *they said among themselves*, as you read in the following words, *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world* (that is, vast multitudes) *is gone after him*[a]; followed him, that is, as their *King*, notwithstanding all that had been done to disparage him. They are forced here to speak more truth than they were aware of, that it was in vain to oppose him: for even when they had killed him, *they perceived* presently *that they prevailed nothing*, but found this literally true, that indeed *the world went after him.* Men of all nations, and not the Jews only, followed him zealously, and became his disciples, notwithstanding the scandal of the cross, which they had cast in their way to discourage them. Of which there immediately follows, in this story, an illustrious presage: for some Gentiles desiring to see our Saviour[b], there came a voice from heaven, upon his prayer that God would glorify his own name, saying, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again*[c]. The glory of God, that is, had appeared lately (as I have explained it before) in the raising of Lazarus, which had drawn many of the Jews to him; and he promises shortly to make it appear more brightly by raising up Jesus from the dead, which would draw also many such Gentiles as these to believe on his name.

To conclude this, that which the above-named Jewish writer pretends in favour of Moses, that he appeared and did his wonders in an age when the world was full of wisdom and knowledge, is a great deal truer of our blessed Saviour. For as he rightly notes[d] that "learning still went along with the monarchies," so it never was at a greater height than in the greatest empire, that of the Romans, and in the highest pitch of that empire, when our Saviour appeared. Upon which account there cannot be any suspicion of fraud in this, or the rest of our Saviour's miracles; which were not wrought in an ignorant age, nor in an obscure and barbarous nation, nor in some blind corner of the country; but openly, near a famous city (for Bethany was hard by Jerusalem), where there were professors of wisdom, and in a time when men could easily distinguish between a real miracle and a mere delusion. This there-

[a] John xii. 19. [b] Ver. 20. [d] Sepher Cosri, part. i. sect. 63. [p. 28.]
[c] Ver. 28.

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fore ought to have opened their eyes to see who he was whose miraculous works they could not but see. And it is justly mentioned to their eternal reproach, in the conclusion of this story, that *though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him*[e]. For they could not with any colour ascribe them to any power but that of God's; who hereby told *them* what the voice from heaven told *him*, that *this was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased.*

II. And truly there can no good reason be given (which is the second thing that I told you should be considered) why the apostles should spend so great a part of the short history they have left of his life in relating his miraculous works, if they had not both known them to be evident and notorious things, which all the country could witness, and likewise esteemed them mighty demonstrations that he was the Son of God. Why else are they so large in describing his cures of several sorts, with the manner of them, if they were not sure that they could not be contradicted, and if they did not desire they should be carefully heeded, and concluded likewise that if they were, men would acknowledge him to be the *Christ*, whom God had sanctified and sent into the world to declare his will to them? which belief, if it were once rooted deeply in their hearts, the apostles knew very well would irresistibly constrain them to be obedient to him in every thing. This is that which gives his words such authority, which makes them sink into our hearts, and possesses them of our very souls, and turns all other opinions and persuasions which are inconsistent with them out of doors; a belief that our Creator speaks unto us by his mouth.

They were well aware that it was no easy thing to persuade the world of this, but that men might justly doubt of so strange a report. "For there is such a vast distance between God and us," as the Jews make that Gentile king Cosar discourse, in the forementioned book[f] called after his name, "that a man will be apt to think the Majesty of heaven will not enter into such familiarity and friendship with flesh and blood as to talk with them. Before we can believe this," says he, "we must see prodigies, and miracles, and behold the course of nature

[e] John xii. 37. [f] [Part. i. sect. 8. p. 13.]

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inverted by such astonishing works as can be done by none but him that created all things. And it is well if, after all this, the mind of man will rest satisfied that the Lord of the world, the Lord of the sun and moon and stars, the Lord of angels as well as all inferior creatures, will have society with such vile clay, such contemptible dirt as we are." And therefore as the Jew, in that discourse with him, declares how God demonstrated his presence with Moses by mighty miracles, seen by all the people, and by their enemies too; which were the fittest argument for God to use, far beyond the little reasonings and disputings of philosophers; even so the apostles prove to us that God was in our Saviour, and that we ought to believe what he says of himself, or concerning us, by enumerating many of the mighty wonders which he did in the midst of the people; wonders that amazed all beholders, and of which they could give no account but that God was with him, and spake by him as his Son, else he could not have done those things which so much exceeded all the power of creatures, nay, all that his own power had wrought for the honour of his servant Moses. It was unreasonable that they should in those days ask any greater tokens of a divine authority; and when they did, our Saviour told them they should have none but the sign of the prophet Jonas, that is, his resurrection, of which I shall speak presently. And it is as unreasonable in us now to expect any thing should be better attested than this truth, that our Saviour did all those things which the apostles have recorded. We have them reported from those that saw them, and that had all opportunities to examine them; from those that beheld more of them than they could number; men of great fidelity and admirable virtue; men that had no interest so great as this, to declare the truth for the good of mankind, whatsoever they lost by it. Unless we will demand that Christ should come again in every age, and also work his wonders in every nation, in every place, before every particular man's eyes, we can have no better assurance than we have of these things. Now how absurdly unreasonable is he who will not be satisfied without such a new descent of our blessed Saviour from heaven continually repeated, and unless he may see him crucified afresh before his eyes! for men may as well disbelieve that part of the story as all the rest, and require that they

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may see all those barbarous cruelties and indignities which we read of acted over again upon our Saviour perpetually to the end of the world; the very mention of which, as it is horrible, so, should it be done, it would destroy the very nature of faith, which is the receiving of something upon report. And that is one sure way of conveying the notice of things to us which we could not otherwise know. And things so made known, if the witnesses be good, are accounted by all mankind to be as sufficient a ground to proceed upon, in the most considerable actions of human life, as the knowledge of them by seeing, feeling, and by the rest of our senses is.

Let us therefore receive the testimony of the apostles of our Lord, seeing there is no exception (as you may hear more before I have done) that lies against their persons, with any shadow or colour of reason. Let us persuade ourselves that this is a true history which they have written, and then we have no faculty of discoursing if we cannot conclude who our Saviour was. He could not possibly have done such things, as the blind man well argued when his eyes were opened by him, *if he had been a sinner*[g]; that is, a deceiver, and not authorized by God to come in his name. If he had been a mere pretender to this dignity, God would not have honoured him on this fashion, nor have given countenance to a lie, by as great miracles as can be wrought for the proof of any truth. He would not have deprived himself of all means to declare his will to us, as he must have done, if he had suffered such a vast number of miracles to be wrought by a deceiver for three years together, and given the most honest hearted men no means to discover the cheat. We cannot believe him to be wise, and to have a care to preserve his own authority, and to support his government, and not think that he would some way or other have controlled the designs of a person of such high pretences, if he had opposed him, and come without his consent, as his only begotten Son, into the world. In brief, if all these things be true which are reported, then our Saviour was *God manifested in our flesh*; and you know what regard and reverence is due to such a person: and that they are true, we have not the least reason to doubt, being reported by *eye-witnesses of his majesty and power*; who were so convinced

[g] John ix. 31, 33.

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of his divine authority, that they ventured their fortunes and lives in his service, merely to promote his honour. And as that whereby they persuaded others to believe in him was the power of the *Spirit* working so many miracles by their hands, and the power of the *Holy Ghost* in divers other wonderful gifts; so it was the same *Spirit* that first convinced them, and made them confidently conclude that he was the *Son of God:* for the first time that we find they made a solemn acknowledgment of him, was upon the working of a great miracle, before St. Peter, James, and John heard the voice from heaven when they were with him in the holy mount. He had fed, you read Matt. xiv. 19, &c., five thousand men, beside women and children, with five loaves and two fishes; and, as soon as he had done, *straightway constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and go before him unto the other side*[h], lest they should join with the multitude in the design which he saw they had in hand, *to take him by force and make him a king*[i]. When he had dismissed the multitude, and spent the rest of the day in prayer, he overtook his disciples in the midst of the sea, in the fourth watch of the night, and found them *tossed with the waves*, because *the wind was contrary*[k]. They were afraid at the first sight of him, and imagined it had been a ghost: who perhaps they thought had raised that storm. But when he spake to them, and bade them be of cheer, and said, *It is I, be not afraid*, Peter was desirous, if it were he, that he would call him to him, and enable him to walk upon the water with him. And so he did, as if it had been firm land, till his heart began to fail him, when he saw the wind boisterous: but then our Lord put forth his hand and kept him from sinking; and both brought him safe to the ship, and made a calm. Upon this, *they that were in the ship* (that is, the rest of the disciples) *came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God*[l]. The sudden ceasing of the wind, that is, his coming to them upon the water, his bearing up Peter, and making him walk along with him, and that when the surface of the water was not plain, but very rough by the crossness of the wind, and his feasting also great multitudes with little provision, made them conclude, without any more ado, that he

[h] Ver. 22. [i] John vi. 15. [k] Matt. xiv. 24, 25. [l] Ver. 33.

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was greater than any man ever was. Their minds were overcome by this mighty power of God in him, which subdued their understandings perfectly to the faith, and so bowed and inclined their hearts that they could not but prostrate themselves at his feet, and acknowledge him to be the Anointed of God. They believed, no doubt, before, that he was a great *prophet*, and a *teacher sent of God*, (as Nicodemus did,) nay, had some beginnings of faith that he was the Messiah[m]. But it was not till now that they were sure of it, and did him honour as, *of a truth*, or certainly, *the Son of God*. And they were no easy people, that believed lightly and foolishly only out of love of novelty, or some such vain humour; but were convinced and overpowered by the hand of God, which was stretched out to work such wonders as these whensoever Jesus pleased.

III. And therefore he had great reason (which is the third and last consideration), when any disputed or doubted of his authority, to refer them, as he doth very often, to his miraculous works for a proof of it; and he appeals to them as one of his *witnesses*, according as St. John here calls them, when he says the *Spirit beareth witness*. So you read in several places of his Gospel, where you find that when the Jews encircled him, as if they would not let him stir till he told them *plainly* whether he was the *Christ* or not; *he answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me*[n]. As if he had said, I have no more for the present to tell you than I have told you often by my *works*. If you can see nothing in these to convince you that I am the *Christ*, all my telling you so in *words* will be to no purpose, but for the present you must remain in unbelief. To the same effect he discourses again in the same chapter[o], *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not* (though I should say never so oft, I am his Son): *but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him*. And thus he reasons with St. Philip: *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in*

[m] John i. 41, 45. [n] x. 24, 25. [o] Ver. 37, 38.

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me, he doth the works. (A clear sign he spake not of himself, and that he was most nearly one with the Father.) *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake*[p]. And so he tells all his apostles that the Jews were inexcusable upon this account, because they did not acknowledge him for the Son of God, though he did such miracles as Moses and all the prophets never did. *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin* (in not *receiving* him as their Messiah, the Son of God): *but now they have both seen* (by those works which he did) *and* (yet) *hated both me and my Father*[q]. They could not endure such a Messiah as he was, though so divinely empowered; and consequently had no love to God, who had set such plain marks and characters of his approbation upon him: of which his divine works were the chief; for he alleges these (as St. John here in his Epistle doth) as the last witness and evidence to him upon earth. *But I have a greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me*[r]. Yes, when John himself sent his disciples to know of him whether he was the *Christ*, he plainly shows that he looked on this as a greater testimony to him than that of their master, which they had received already; and therefore gives them no other answer but this: *Go, and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them*[s]. Where, though he mention his heavenly doctrine, yet he chiefly insists upon the witness of the *Spirit* as most apt to affect them; and *in that very hour*, when they came to be resolved, as St. Luke tells us, *He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight*[t].

This, he thought, could not but satisfy them, if they would believe their eyes; especially if they would believe also what they *heard*, that he raised up the dead. He could not now

[p] John xiv. 10, 11. [q] xv. 24. [r] v. 36. [s] Matt. xi. 4, 5.
[t] Luke vii. 21.

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give them a clearer and fuller testimony of his divinity: and he relied so much upon this evidence, that when he had cured a man sick of the palsy, he told the scribes that he loosed him from the chain of his sins, and restored him to health, and bade him arise and walk, now that he was pardoned, on purpose *that they might know the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins*[u]: that is, to take away all temporal punishment that is due to sin; as after his death and resurrection, when he came to heaven, he had power to take away the eternal, and to give life immortal. Now who could have such a power but *God only?* as the scribes say very well upon this occasion[v]. Who could grapple with the devil, the *prince*, the *god of the world*[w], but only he who is God blessed for ever, as Jesus appeared by these miraculous works to be? And indeed it is very remarkable that he wrought his miracles frequently, just as God Almighty brings things to pass. *God*, says Moses, *said, Let there be light, and there was light*[x]. *He spake*, as the Psalmist's words are, *and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast*[y]. In like manner did our Saviour say to the leper, *Be thou clean: and immediately his leprosy was cleansed*[z]. And to the foul spirit, *Come out, I charge thee, thou dumb and deaf spirit*[a]: and the spirit cried and came out. And to Lazarus, *Come forth: and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes*[b]. Which was a notable evidence that indeed he was the Son of God, since he acted so like to the Father Almighty. This was so well known, that when the centurion came and besought him for a sick servant of his, who lay in grievous torments, and our Saviour promised to come and heal him, he modestly declines the acceptance of that favour, in a sense of his unworthiness to have him come under his roof, and desires him that he would *speak the word only*, and he believed his servant should be healed[c]. The first cure that we read particularly related being that of the leper aforementioned, and wrought by a word; he hoped, it is like, that his servant might be cured as easily, without giving our Saviour the trouble of coming to his house, and laying his hands on him for his recovery. Though,

[u] Matt. ix. 6. [v] Mark ii. 7. [w] John xii. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 4.
[x] [Gen. i. 3.] [y] [Ps. xxxiii. 9.] [z] Matt. viii. 3.
[a] Mark ix. 25. [b] [John xi. 43, 44.] [c] Matt. viii. 8.

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by the way, we may note, that herein appeared also his great power, that as he could heal (if he pleased) without touching, so he could heal at a great distance. Yea, the woman that did but touch (not him, but) the very hem of his *garment*[c], had virtue and power (that is, something from the *Spirit* that was in him) communicated to her, which restored her to perfect health. What doth all this note, but that he who wrought such things, so easily, so readily, in any place, and on all occasions, was indeed the Son of God? He ought to have been honoured as the Author, because he was the Restorer of human nature. There was great reason to acknowledge so great a Benefactor to mankind to be more than a man; for none but God either could or would bestow such blessings.

It may be said indeed that Moses and some of the prophets wrought miracles, and yet cannot thence be concluded to be persons of such quality. But it may as easily be answered, that their miracles were nothing comparable, either in their multitude or greatness, to those of the Lord Jesus. For the multitude, remember how St. John concludes his Gospel, in which he hath recorded some of them, *And there are also many other things,* says he, *which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.* For *he went about,* as hath been often said, *doing good,* and filled every place with so many miracles of his mercy, that we cannot imagine into how many volumes it would have swelled, if a record of every one of them had been taken. And as for the greatness and the quality of them, you find some among those which St. John hath set down which were never heard of before *since the world began*[d], which might well make our Saviour say, as I noted just now, that *he had done among them the works that no man did, else they had not had sin*[e]; that is, he could not have charged them with the guilt of refusing to believe him to be the Son of God, because it would not have been sufficiently proved. But this is not all the reply that may be made to this exception; it is far more considerable that Jesus affirmed himself to be the Son of God, to which dignity neither Moses nor the prophets ever pretended. The end of miracles

[c] Mark v. 29. [d] John ix. 32. [e] xv. 24.

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was to prove the truth of that which the person that wrought them delivered. And therefore, as their miracles demonstrated the truth of that message which Moses and the prophets brought from God, so our Saviour's evinced the truth of his, which was, that they were only the servants, but he the Son of God. This was as strongly attested by what he did, as any thing the men of God taught in former times was by their works. Yea, his miracles bare as fair a proportion in their bigness and number to this high and great thing which they were to prove, that he was God's Son, as the miracles of Moses and the prophets bare to those lesser truths which they were brought to establish.

And here, for to put a period to this part of my discourse, it will be very useful to observe the different way of proceeding for the establishing and promoting a religion instituted by men, and a religion whose author is God. This I find very well noted to my hand in a learned writer of the Jewish nation, whom I have already mentioned[e]. "When men," says he, "make laws and settle a religion, whose original is from their own minds and devised by themselves, though they may pretend that it comes from God, yet they are not able to make it take place without the power of the sword, or the countenance and assistance of some prince who by his authority shall cause it to be received. But a religion that is indeed divine is planted in a divine manner. When laws are derived from God, he establishes them by his power and might, and overawes men by such wonders, as without any human force procure obedience. Thus," says he, "our religion began. When the children of Israel were in grievous servitude, and when the land promised to their fathers was in the hand of potent kings, God sent Moses and Aaron armed with no power but that of working miracles, changing the ordinary and usual course of nature, and inflicting in a moment grievous plagues upon the water, the earth, the air, the plants, the beasts, and the bodies of men, throughout all the land of Egypt; whereby the prince that kept them in bondage was forced to let them go. And in their journey they were conducted by the guidance of a bright cloud, and they passed through the sea, and they

[e] Sepher Cosri, part. i. sect. 80, &c. [p. 39 sqq.]

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were fed with manna in the wilderness forty years; and saw one miracle after another, which convinced them they ought to submit to that word of the Lord which Moses spake unto them." To this purpose that writer very rationally discourses. Now just as he shows that Moses proved his mission from God, so I have briefly related how our Saviour likewise demonstrated that he was the royal prophet, whom Moses foretold God would send into the world. In an age when they not only groaned under the Roman yoke, but were also superstitiously enthralled to a number of rites and ceremonies devised by their elders, superadded to all the burden of the law of Moses; and moreover grievously *oppressed by the devil*, as all the rest of the world likewise were far more than they; God *raised up a mighty salvation to them out of the house of his servant David*[f]. Our Lord, that is, on a sudden appeared as a Redeemer and Deliverer from the bondage in which they lay, not with any worldly policy or force, but merely with the Spirit and *power of God*[g], who sent an herald, but without the power of miracles, to proclaim his coming. And as soon as he had done crying, his mouth being stopped by Herod's throwing him into prison, our Lord presently came forth, shining most gloriously in the illustrious works that he did every where; which were such as that time called for, as Moses his miracles were proper to the occasions and necessities of his days. And some of them were very like those wrought by Moses, and others bear as great a resemblance to them as twins are wont to do to each other who lie together in the same womb. He healed more than Moses killed. He turned their water into wine, as Moses did the water of the river into blood. He walked upon the very surface of the sea, and called one of his disciples to accompany him there. He fed multitudes with a little quantity of bread, as Moses had fed the Israelites in the wilderness. This he did more than once, and that in a desert too; showing what he was able to do if there had been the like need that there was in former times. Then they should not have asked, *What sign showest thou?* (equal to Moses they mean,) *what dost thou work*[h]*?* For it was plain enough he could have fed them forty years in that manner as well as

[f] [Luke i. 69.] [g] 1 Cor. ii. 5. [h] John vi. 30.

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once; which was the thing they seem to desire, when they say in the next words, *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat*[i]. That is, he did not feed them for one day or two, (as thou hast done,) but a long time, and that from heaven; let us see thee do so, that we may leave him and follow thee. And if he had not done enough already to work faith in them, and they had lived now alway in a desert, as their fathers did then, no doubt he would; for that he could was evident, else how should he have fed them thus miraculously at all? Many other miracles also declared that he had the same power in the air that he had on the earth, and could as easily have brought bread from heaven as multiplied the loaves which had now filled so many of them. The very devils were as subject to him as the meanest creature in the world: and he raised the dead by his powerful word, which Moses never did. All which is recorded by the apostles to show what cause they had to believe in Jesus, and how his religion was planted and propagated in the world, as the other wonders are recorded by Moses, to show with what authority he came, and how he settled the Israelites in the belief of his laws. And there is no more cause to question whether Jesus be the Son of God, the Lord of the world, who came with such a Spirit, than there was then to doubt whether Moses was his servant, and the lawgiver of that people among whom he did such wonders. Nor so much neither, for the greater his pretences were, the greater reason there was that they should have been discountenanced by such a Spirit as was in him, if they had not been true. It is incredible that God should let the world be abused so long, by so many miracles, and so great, that never was the like, without any the least confutation; and abused by a lie of so dangerous a nature, and so reproachful to his name, and so directly opposite to his government, which this person (if he were an impostor, and said he was his Son whom we must worship, when he was not) sought to overthrow and take out of his hands. We are secure that God would not have abetted an usurper in so high a manner against himself. And as for any unclean spirits, if they could have done such things as Jesus wrought, they would not have employed their power, we are sure, to

[i] John vi. 31.

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establish a doctrine so pure and holy as the Christian religion teaches, which utterly destroys all that wickedness in which they delight. There was all the reason in the world to believe one who came thus by the Spirit, when he came by Water too; and by his mighty power promoted nothing but the most excellent piety, virtue, and goodness among mankind.

But concerning the miracles of our Saviour, there will be an occasion to say so much, in pursuance of what I design, hereafter, that I shall add no more of them here. Let us now proceed (having heard what the Spirit did by him) to consider what wonderful things it did for him: whereby it proved him to be the Christ, the Son of God.

II.

And the Spirit sure very eminently bare witness of him when it raised him from the dead, and not long after advanced him into heaven, to live for ever with God. For both these are ascribed to the power of the Spirit in express texts of holy Scripture. Of the former you read in 1 Pet. iii. 18, where the apostle says, *He was put to death in the flesh* (being mortal as we are), *but quickened by the Spirit;* that is, raised up again from the dead by that divine power in him, whereby he had raised up others before he died. It was impossible that he should be held by the chains of death, who had such a Spirit in him. By this he shook them off more easily than Samson brake the withs or cords wherewith he was bound, when *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him*[j]. And being thus quickened again, the same Spirit also presented him to God in the heavens, as his dearly beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; who had given him full satisfaction, and done his whole will, for which he sent him into the world. So you read in Heb. ix. 14, where the *offering* which, the apostle says, *he made of himself to God through the eternal Spirit*, was that bloody sacrifice on the cross, which after his resurrection he offered to God, and continues still to offer in the heavenly sanctuary: as the high priest under the law offered the blood of beasts, after they were slain at the altar, in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. And this oblation is said to be made by the Spirit, because that raised him to life after he was

[j] [Judges xv. 14.]

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slain, translated him out of his mortal condition, carried him on high, made his body glorious and immortal; and having thus made him fit to be for ever with God, presented him unto his Majesty, where he remains, *through the power of an endless life, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek*[i]. And *this working of the mighty power of God, which wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers, might and dominion, and every name that is named*[j], was such a testimony of the Spirit to him, that it confounded his adversaries more than all the miracles which he had wrought by the power of the same Spirit in his lifetime. And therefore the apostles, I observe, allege this immediately after the other, as that which completed the testimony of the Spirit to him.

Till this was clear and evident, they relied wholly upon the other, as you may perceive by the discourse of those two disciples that went with our Saviour to Emaus: who doubted of his resurrection after news had been brought them of it, but acknowledged him to have been a *prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people;* and upon that account were much troubled that their rulers had crucified him, because they *trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*[k]. When they were fully persuaded therefore that he was indeed made alive again, (as these very men presently saw,) then they add this as an argument of the greatest force to convince the world that he was the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind. This is the substance, I observe, of both St. Peter's first sermons to the Jews and to the Gentiles. He begins with a relation how great Jesus was in his life, and then proceeds to show how much greater God had made him by raising him from the dead. Read but what he says to his crucifiers on the day of Pentecost, where he first tells them, that *Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves very well knew:* and then, that he being *delivered to them, and by wicked hands crucified and slain, God had raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he*

[i] [Heb. vii. 16, 17.] [j] [Ephes. i. 19, 21.] [k] Luke xxiv. 19, 20.

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should be holden of it[l]. In like manner he discourses to the first Gentile converts, where he tells Cornelius and his friends, *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: and how he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; of which they were witnesses, who had seen all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem:* and then adds, that *God raised him up the third day, after he was slain and hanged on a tree; and showed him openly, though not to all the people, yet to witnesses chosen before of God, even to him and others, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead*[m]. The apostle had nothing to add beyond this, which was the greatest testimony of the Spirit to him. Now it spake with a loud voice in his behalf: for if he had not been God's Son, (as he said he was,) he would never have taken him out of his grave, much less have advanced him into the heavens: where it was manifested he now lived, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, which fell upon Cornelius and his friends while St. Peter was speaking those words. This was all that could be added to what the apostle had said; and God sent this to prove his resurrection and exaltation at his right hand. Which was such an undeniable proof of his authority, that having thus raised him, the Spirit, as I said, finished its testimony to him. For how should it speak plainer or more convincingly? or who can think that it would have continued to speak for him, in this manner, after his death, if he had died with a lie in his mouth? The Spirit, which St. John here says is the *Truth*, openly declared, by restoring him to life, that his blood was most acceptable to God. It showed that it was no common thing, but the blood of the *Holy One of God*. It witnessed to that witness, and proved, that as he did not speak contrary to his knowledge, so he did not speak contrary to the truth. And if the Spirit could not be believed in this, it would have lost all its credit, and never have been believed more; we could never have known any thing by the greatest wonders it can work, if such things had been done for a deceiver, as it is apparent were done for Jesus.

For that he was raised up to life again, we are assured by

[l] Acts ii. 22–24. [m] x. 38–40.

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the testimony of the apostles, and by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, of which none can reasonably doubt, as it were easy to show, if it were not my present business rather to demonstrate that this was an irrefragable testimony of the Spirit to him, a most powerful means to beget faith and assurance in men's minds that Jesus is the Son of God. It was for this very end that St. John wrote the history of his resurrection, and the several signs and tokens they had of it, as he tells us in those words, *Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*[n]. For this plainly reversed the sentence of condemnation which the Jews had passed upon him. It showed that he was acquitted in a far higher court than that which judged him worthy of death: whose decree it rescinded, and openly declared that he was no blasphemer when he said he was the Son of God. If he had, God would have been more concerned than they to have kept him fast in his grave for ever; that there so great a lie might have been buried together with himself.

For the further clearing of which, it will be fit to consider briefly these three things. First, that before he died, he promised his apostles that he would rise again, and gave this also as a sign to all the people, whereby they should know that he was the Christ. And secondly, that he declared this to be the greatest sign he had to give of it. And thirdly, that his very enemies confess it is a sufficient sign and satisfactory testimony of any truth.

I. For the first of these, that it was a sign promised to his apostles and predicted to the people, there is nothing more easy to be observed in the Gospel story. For he tells his apostles very often, that they should see him betrayed and killed, but on the third day he would rise again. No sooner had St. Peter confessed that he was the Christ, but *from that time forth Jesus began to shew them how that he must go to Jerusalem, and there suffer many things, and be killed, and be raised again the third day*[o]. For he would not have them expect a

[n] John xx. 30, 31.

[o] Matt. xvi. 21.

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Christ that should reign here on earth, but in heaven: and till he went thither, he would not have them so much as preach that he was the Christ[p]. And what he had said here at Cæsarea, he repeats again when they were in Galilee[q]; and again when they were going up to Jerusalem[r]. And not many hours before he was apprehended, he said again, *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father*[s]: at which words they were greatly troubled, because they minded more what he said about his death than they regarded his resurrection which was to follow. But the greater their trouble was then, the greater their satisfaction was afterwards, when they saw him alive again. The less disposed they were to believe it, the more confident they grew when they saw such a wonder. They wept and lamented when he was gone, as he told them they would[t]: but when hec ame to see them again, their heart rejoiced with such a joy as none could despoil them of[u]. The ground of which joy you shall see presently, when I have also remembered you how he foretold his resurrection to the people, as a testimony that he was the Christ. It was their wont in all ages, and with great reason, to ask for a sign that a man was sent of God: and therefore, now that Jesus came with such authority as to redress many abuses among them, and to reform that nation and temple, they ask him, *What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things*[x]*?* He had given them signs enough already, and therefore makes no other answer but this (to let them know what should be the last sign): *Destroy this temple,* (pointing to his own body,) *and in three days I will raise it up*[y].

From whence we may safely argue, that Jesus having given this as a sign and token whereby it should evidently appear, more than by all his miracles, that he was the Son of God; the Almighty would never have fulfilled this promise and prediction, if he had usurped his authority, and taken upon him to be his Anointed, without his leave. Nothing was more easy than to quash all his pretences, which relied upon his resurrection; without which his apostles, as I told you, had no authority to preach that he was the Christ. It had been but

[p] Matt. xvi. 20. [q] xvii. 22, 23. [r] xx. 19. [s] John xvi. 16.
[t] Ver. 20. [u] Ver. 22. [x] John ii. 18. [y] Ver. 19.

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letting him rot in his grave, as all men naturally do when they are dead; and all the world would have been of the mind of the Pharisees, that he was a deceiver. And God sure hath not so little care of the world, as to deny them such ready and obvious means of satisfaction about the most important truth. We ought to think rather that he would have concerned himself to see that this temple, which he spake of, should lie for ever in its ruins, and be turned to dust and ashes. He, who alone could do it, would have been so far from rearing it up again, that he would have provided it should be profaned, and made the vilest rubbish in the world. But there being very good proofs, *many infallible proofs*, (as St. Luke speaks[z],) that it was quite otherways, and that indeed it was raised after three days, as he had told the people; it was a testimony from God most high that he dwelt in that temple, and that it was his holy place, where he manifested his glory. He declared to them by this that Jesus was no deceiver, but that they ought to believe he was the Christ of God. For that a man should be raised from the dead by any other power than that of God's, all the world concludes is impossible. If any of those lying spirits, which love to cheat and abuse the world, could do such feats, why do we not see this frequently happen, that so they might break the force of this testimony, and overthrow our belief? Above all things they should be concerned, one would think, to work this wonder; for then we should be forced to confess that there is nothing so eminent and singular in this thing as to move us to give credit unto Jesus. But since it never has been done, but only in this instance, and it was also a fulfilling of his word when he gave it as a token of this truth, we have reason to conclude, as St. Paul did after he had seen him alive, that *this is very Christ.* Upon this ground it was that the apostles so much rejoiced *when they saw him again;* for now, as St. John tells us, *when he was risen from the dead, they remembered that he had said this unto them* (concerning the raising up the temple of his body), *and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said*[a]. Now they were assured they had not been deluded, and yielded their assent all this while to a fancy. They saw clearly that he was

[z] Acts i. 3. [a] John ii. 22.

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their King, though he had been vilely disgraced and crucified. And therefore, when they parted with him again after his resurrection, they did not lament and mourn as they had done before, but *worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God*[b].

II. But it is time to add, that as it was a *sign* which he gave them beforehand of this truth, so he told them it was the greatest sign which he had to give. He had done many things in his lifetime to persuade the Jews that he was the Christ, but still they were so perverse as to ask for more signs of it. Though he had done more miracles than ever Moses or all the prophets had done from the beginning, yet the Pharisees continue to say, *Master, we would see a sign from thee*[c]. One would think they had a mind to learn of him, since they call him *Master;* but it was only a compliment, as St. Luke informs us[d]. And therefore our Saviour calls them *an evil and adulterous generation*, who were degenerated from the manners of their pious ancestors; for they were contented with less proofs of that which God required them to believe, and would have been ashamed to *seek after a sign*, as these men did, after such evident tokens of a divine presence in him as they beheld. Why should he gratify men of so naughty a humour, whom nothing would satisfy but *a sign from heaven*, which St. Luke says they demanded? nor would be convinced then neither, he clearly discerned by their frivolous cavils at all that he had already done. Therefore he tells them, *no sign shall be given them, but the sign of the prophet Jonas*, (which was not a sign from heaven, but from the bowels of the earth.) *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*[e]. Which was as much as to say, It is in vain to attempt the conviction of such corrupt and depraved minds as yours are by such means as these; and therefore I must tell you, all that is remaining for the opening your eyes and conquering your perverseness is my resurrection. As Jonas was miraculously restored again to live upon the earth, after he had been swallowed up by a whale in the sea, and lain there three days, which was a notable sign that he was a

[b] Luke xxiv. 52, 53. [c] Matt. xii. 38. [d] Luke xi. 16. [e] Matt. xii. 39, 40.

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prophet, and could not but obtain him credit with the Ninevites when they came to the knowledge of this wonder; so will I be restored again to life, after you have killed me and have lain three days in the bowels of the earth; and if this will not satisfy you, there is no other sign to follow this for your conviction. But let me tell you, (as he adds,) if you still persist in unbelief when this is fulfilled, *the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with you and condemn you: for they repented at Jonas his preaching; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here*[f]. That is, though Jonas was not really dead, but only had his life wonderfully preserved, yet the report of it wrought faith and the fruits of faith, repentance and amendment, in the hearts of the Ninevites; and what a condemnation will it prove to you, if after you have seen me actually dead, and it be demonstrated to you that I am raised to life again, you will not believe on me?

The very same thing is repeated again[g], where, they having once more demanded *a sign from heaven*[h], he answers them, that they should have none but this of Jonas; *and he left them, and departed.* As if he had said, I have nothing more to say to you now; all that remains is that I die and rise again, which is the last and greatest token that I am the Christ. And indeed this was a sign so great, that it gave force and strength to the other signs which had been given of this truth. For in the next chapter we read, that three apostles having been confirmed in this belief by a voice from heaven, which said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him:* Jesus charges them, saying, *Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead*[i]. Till he had taken possession of his kingdom and was set upon his throne, and thence sent the Holy Ghost, he saw it would be to no purpose for the apostles to publish this testimony of God the Father to him. For they had already slighted the testimony of John Baptist, who heard the like voice from heaven at his baptism, and thereupon bare witness that Jesus was the Christ; and therefore it was not likely that they would listen to the apostles, when they came and testified that the same words were spoken in their hearing, until their testimony should be justified by the authority of

[f] Matt. xii. 41. [g] xvi. 4. [h] Ver. 1. [i] xvii. 9.

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such a proof as this, that he was risen from the dead. This would mightily back all that they said, and make it undeniable by any but those who would deny his resurrection; which was wilfully and without any reason, not only to call them liars, but to affront the Holy Ghost, who witnessed together with them that he was risen from the dead. Which being a proof of such strength that our Saviour relied upon it above all other, it is manifest to common reason, that if there be a God (as we are sure there is) who loves sincerity and truth, he should above all things have taken order that this should not have had such evidence as it hath, if indeed Jesus was not his Son. Though he had suffered wonders to be done by him, and voices from heaven had been heard, yet still he gained not much belief in the most considerable part of the Jewish nation; and therefore, appealing in conclusion to this grand testimony, sure there is no Providence, or else it would have taken care, in case he had been a deceiver, that it should have been as evident that he did not rise from the dead as now it is that he did. Though the world had been amused a long time with discourses about him, and with strange things which he was thought to do, yet here had been a nick of time at one stroke to have broken the force of all these arguments, and blasted his credit, and undeceived the people, had there been nothing of God in it. But since this last and greatest token did come to pass, as was proved by witnesses of unquestionable truth, it justified his pretences, and added strength to all the former testimonies which have been given to him; demonstrating him plainly to have been *a man approved of God among them by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves knew*[j].

III. And this truly was so great a sign, that his very enemies could not but confess it was satisfactory, and a sufficient evidence of any truth. Which may be clearly discerned from hence, that they never to this day went about to show that, though he was raised again, yet it was not a proof that he was the *Christ;* but all their endeavour hath been to persuade the people that he was not raised again. They had no other way but to deny this, that so they might not confess the other. They were utterly undone, they knew, and must lose all their

[j] [Acts ii. 22.]

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reputation with the people, if he was raised from the dead (because it would effectually prove what they denied), and therefore they hired the soldiers to say that his disciples stole him away while they slept. A story so sillily contrived (as I hope to show in another place) that it is a very great evidence they shut their eyes against this light, for fear it should show them that they had been the murderers of their *Christ*. They could not but say, that, if he was raised again, he was the *Christ;* and therefore were resolved to say any thing, though never so absurd, rather than grant that he was raised to life again, which must strike them dead. He was not a king for their purpose; and therefore they hated him, and endeavoured by any means to obscure whatsoever tended to prove his authority. He never made any show of worldly greatness, or gave them any hope he would fight their battles against the Romans; and therefore they entered into a league against him, to make perpetual war with him; and sought, by all the lies they could invent, to suppress his growing name, and, by all the cruelties they had power to use, to dishearten his followers from professing their belief in it. But the apostles of our Lord knowing the truth of this better than they could do, and that it was a mere calumny which they spread abroad concerning their stealing his body out of the sepulchre, could not be deterred, by any punishment which they or all the power on earth could inflict, from preaching *Jesus and the resurrection*. For on the one hand they saw it was confessed by malice itself, that, if he was raised from the dead, it could not be denied that he was the *Christ;* and on the other hand they saw with their own eyes that he was raised from the dead, and knew it was a malicious slander which the Pharisees had divulged, of their breaking open the monument of the dead. This both confirmed their faith and inflamed their zeal. If they had any doubts remaining, this very tale helped to disperse them. But they were soon past all doubt by the coming of the Holy Ghost, which he sent them, to witness the resurrection together with them. Then it was impossible they should doubt of his being alive, when they felt his mighty power in their hearts. This dissipated all the mists and vapours, which had gathered about them, and darkened their understandings. By this Jesus brake forth upon them in a

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fresh lustre: and, like the sun rending all the clouds in pieces, illuminated not only them, but the whole world, in a short space with the beams of his glory.

How should he do otherways, after such a proof as this? which is so great that they could never wish for a greater. It is not above six hundred years ago, since a Jew called El David gave out that he was *the Christ*, and drew a great many followers after him. Upon which he was apprehended and brought before an Arabian prince, who asked him, "What miracle, what prodigy dost thou show, that we may believe?" To which he answered, "Sir, cut off my head, and I will live again." This he said craftily, to avoid greater torments which he foresaw would be inflicted on him, for affirming that which he could not prove. But observe the prince's reply, (as it is related by Maimonides [h], in a letter of his to the Jews at Marseilles about this very business): "Thou canst not give us a greater sign than this. And if it fall out so, that thou dost rise again to life after I have cut off thy head, I and all my people (nay, all the world sure) will believe what thou sayest is true; and that our forefathers inherited nothing but vanity and lies, which did not profit them." And presently the experiment was made. He commanded him to be beheaded, and there was an end of his cheat. And so likewise there had been of this business which we are treating of, if Jesus had not risen. For he said just as this El David did, "Kill me, if you please; I will live again." Which sign coming to pass, as we have the greatest reason to believe, we ought to follow the resolution of the prince now mentioned, by submitting ourselves to him, and heartily acknowledging him to be the Lord. When he was upon his cross, the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, said, *He saved others, let him save himself. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him* [i]. If our Lord had taken them at their word, we cannot tell what they would have done. But it is plain he intended to give them a better ground of faith than that. If they had demanded a greater thing, they should have had greater satisfaction. If they had said, *He raised others from*

[h] [Inter observat. G. H. Vorstii ad Tsemach Davidis Ganz. p. 303. Vide etiam Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, lib. ix. cap. 11. tom. vi. p. 303.]

[i] Matt. xxvii. 41, 42.

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the dead, let him raise up himself after we have crucified him; let him come out of his grave, if he be the King of Israel; and then have used all the care in the world to see whether he rose again or no: they had been convinced and persuaded to believe on his name. It was not fit to do the other, because he was to die for the sins of the people: but this he did, though they did not ask it, to fulfil his own promise, and to show that he was the person promised to their fathers. And it is so much greater than the other, as it is a greater thing to be made alive again after death than to save a man's self from dying.

I hope then I may conclude, with the apostle St. Paul, that this piece of the *mystery of godliness* is without controversy, *God was manifest in the flesh, justified* ἐν Πνεύματι, *in* or *by the Spirit*[i]. The *Spirit* which did such mighty things by Jesus, and at last raised him from the dead, warranted him to be God manifested in our flesh. It cleared him from all the envious and malicious accusations of his adversaries while he was alive, by the many miraculous works which it wrought: and it purged him from all suspicion of blasphemy, which was charged against him and took away his life, by raising from the dead and presenting him in heaven a pure oblation to God. It hath acquitted him fully in all impartial men's thoughts, wiped off all the guilt which was cast upon him, set him before the eyes of all the world as a person innocent and just, and made him glorious and *great even in his blood* (as those words may be rendered, Heb. xiii. 20[k]), wherewithal he is gone into the heavenly places, there to appear before God for us: which he would not have been able, nor even dared to do, if he were not fully *justified*, and perfectly a righteous person. This is that witness which our Saviour himself promises to Nathanael, as higher than that which he had already received[l]. He was convinced of the authority of Jesus, and acknowledged him to be the King of Israel, because he could search into the secrets of the hearts, and know men at a distance: but our Lord tells him he should *see greater things than these,* even *behold the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;* that is, he should have the witness of

[i] [1 Tim. iii. 16.]

[k] [Τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου.]

[l] John i. 50, 51.

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the *Spirit*, sending the angels to minister unto him when he was raised from the dead, and when he was exalted unto God's right hand in the heavens.

The *ascension* and *descension* of angels is but an Hebrew form of speech, whereby they express the ministry and service of angels to the Divine Majesty. A servant first goes to his master to receive his orders before he can be sent by him; and therefore *ascending* is put before *descending:* and by both is nothing else meant but the ministry of those heavenly creatures that wait upon the throne of God, and *do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.* From thence they were sent to attend on Jesus at his resurrection and at his ascension, as his disciples witnessed, and Nathanael among the rest; for he is mentioned as a person present when Jesus showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection[l], and is thought by many to be the same with St. Bartholomew. As Israel saw in a dream the angels *ascend and descend* upon a ladder reaching from earth to heaven[m]; so this true Israelite (who, as Gregory Nyssen[n] expresses it, showed *καθαρὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ χαρακτῆρα τοῦ πατριάρχου*, &c. 'the pure character or mark of that patriarch upon him,' in his honesty and uprightness of heart) beheld the like vision of angels, but in a more apparent manner, when he was awake; that he might hereby be confirmed in the faith of Jesus, as Jacob was by his vision in the belief of God's providence. And indeed this was a great confirmation to his and to our faith. For I conceive that this phrase, *ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, upon the Son of man,* is the same with that where it is said the Holy Ghost came *ἐπ' αὐτὸν, upon him;* which, as it signifies that he was made partaker, or rather was possessed, of the Holy Ghost, and it became his, so this other like phrase of the angels' ascending and descending *upon him* denotes, by the same reason, that he was made the Lord of them, and had them given to him as his ministers and attendants, to be employed in his service. And so it was remarkably fulfilled which our Saviour said, that he should see *greater things* than those he mentioned before: for hereby he knew not only that he was the *King of Israel,* as he had con-

[l] John xxi. 2.
[m] Gen. xxviii. 12.
[n] Homil. 15. in Cantic. [tom. i. p. 692 A.]

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fessed[o], but that he was the King of angels, the Lord of lords. Yea, hereby it appeared that he hath the power of God; because, just as the angels are represented doing their service to his Majesty (in that Genesis xxviii.), so our Lord foretels with the greatest certainty they should see them waiting upon him. And so they did, as you read in the first of the Acts of the Apostles[p]; which proved him to be indeed *the heir of all things.*

Now, to show a little more fully the greatness of this testimony of the *Spirit,* and that it was greater (as Jesus here saith to Nathanael) than the gift of discerning spirits, which I called a gift of the *Holy Ghost,* to distinguish it from the *Spirit;* let us consider a little that speech of our Saviour's; *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men*[q], &c.; which heavy doom, St. Mark tells us, was pronounced upon them *because they said he had an unclean spirit*[r]. This shows what the blasphemy was, in which if they continued there was no hope of pardon: for if he *by the Spirit of God cast out devils* (as he tells them[s]), then it was rank blasphemy, the highest degree of evil speaking and calumny, to impute these very cures and wonderful works to the power of the devil, which were wrought by that divine power. And this sin was therefore unpardonable, which shows how great this testimony of the *Spirit* is, because there were no means left to convince them that Jesus was the Son of God (without which belief their sins could not be forgiven), if they persisted not only in denying the authority of the *Spirit,* but were so bold as to blaspheme it. For what could work upon their hard hearts if this proved ineffectual? Might they not better deny the voices from heaven, which they did not hear, than these wonderful works, which they beheld every where with their own eyes? or might they not as well say that those were delusions, as call these works diabolical operations? Might they not in like manner slight his power of knowing secrets, and impute it to some other skill? What is there in which they might not shuffle and resist the light, if, in so clear a case as this, Jesus his opposition to

[o] Ver. 50. [p] Ver. 9, 10, 11. [q] Matt. xii. 31, 32. [r] Mark iii. 30. [s] Matt. xii. 28.

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the devil, casting him out of possession, and that on purpose to establish an holy doctrine quite contrary to his interest, and in a number of other miraculous works, they would be so obstinate as to say the devil himself had the principal hand? There is no question to be made but they, who were so perverse as not to see this *finger of God*, but continued blinder than the Egyptian magicians, when it did so many wonders, would shut their eyes against any other means of conviction; which could not be expected (it must also be remembered), because God himself had no higher evidence to give them than this of his *Spirit*.

But then you must not understand this speech of our Saviour as if he meant that those persons to whom he spake these words had run themselves at that instant into this unpardonable sin; but that if they still proceeded to blaspheme it when the *Spirit* had finished its testimony (that is, done all those things which still were behind for their conviction), then they would fall into it, and remain in it irrecoverably. For you must remember that under the word *Spirit* is comprehended the power that raised Christ from the dead, and presented him to God in the heavens, that he might receive of him the promise of the Holy Ghost, which he shed upon the apostles abundantly, as a witness of his resurrection and glorious exaltation. If after this, that Jesus was risen again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and showed himself to be there by sending the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, they did not believe, but still blasphemed the holy name of Jesus and the *Spirit* of God, saying that they were drunk who were filled with the Holy Ghost, as here they said Jesus had a devil; then they were uncapable of obtaining remission of sin, because there was nothing more to be done for their conversion, but they must be abandoned to the hardness and impenitence of their hearts. This I am sure must be the meaning, because our Lord himself, after he had pronounced the Pharisees unpardonable, who spake against the *Spirit* whereby he cast out devils, tells them expressly that there was one sign more remaining to convince them (which is a demonstration they had not yet sinned incurably, nor could not till that sign was past), and that was the sign, as you heard, of the prophet Jonas[t], which, he grants

[t] Matt. xii. 39, 40.

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them again[u], should not be denied them. Now every body understands by this his death and resurrection, with those things that followed upon it, the sending of the Holy Ghost, to enable his apostle to go and teach all nations, as Jonas went, after he came, as we may say, out of his grave, and preached to the great city Nineveh. But then this was still the *Spirit*, that was thus continued to them (by that our Lord being raised, and it working wonders also at his death); which if they continued to resist, when it had fully done the whole office of a witness, and was all poured forth, then they were under the absolute sentence of condemnation. In brief, to blaspheme the *Spirit*, in this comprehensive sense of the word, (including the resurrection and that which followed to prove it,) was the unpardonable sin, and none else. And thus our Saviour's meaning is to be expounded; If one should *speak a word against the Son of man* (that is, him), despising him because of his poor parentage, and calling him *the son of a carpenter*, or some such name, this, though blamable, might be pardoned, *propter corporis vilitatem*, as St. Hierome speaks[v], 'because of the meanness of his outward appearance.' Nay, if a man proceeded so far as to call him *a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;* this also might find pardon, because he did not hitherto speak evil of the works proper to a God, but only of those belonging to a man. And more than this, should he call him *deceiver* or *seducer*, when he heard him teach the people, it would not be unpardonable, because no man is to be believed merely upon his own word. But if, when these men saw the mighty works of the *Spirit* justify his preaching to be divine, they still continued to speak evil of him, this was a very dangerous blasphemy; because they could not after this call him a seducer or false teacher, but they must reproach the Holy Spirit as well as him, and call that the work of the devil which was performed by the power of the Spirit of God. And if when the *Holy Ghost* was come from heaven upon the apostles, witnessing that he was *quickened by the Spirit*, and by the same *Spirit* presented to God in the heavens, they still went on to speak evil of him, then there was no hope of remission, because they blasphemed the last remedy

[u] Matt. xvi. 4. [v] [In loc. tom. vii. col. 81 D.]

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for their recovery, which was the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven to persuade them to repent and believe on his name.

And that we must take our Saviour in this sense is further apparent from the name of the *Holy Ghost*, which he uses when he speaks of this unpardonable sin, never calling it the blasphemy against the *Spirit*, but always the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost;* which you know was not as yet given when our Saviour spake these words. In the beginning of this discourse[w] he mentions only the *Spirit:* but then coming to describe the danger of blaspheming it, he doth not say that the blasphemy of the *Spirit* simply, that is, of those present works of his, was unpardonable, but that the blasphemy against the *Holy Ghost*, when it was come, should never be forgiven: which must needs be understood, as I have already argued, concerning the contempt and reproachful usage of those following *witnesses*, the resurrection, ascension, and the preaching of the apostles endowed with power from on high; because, though the *Spirit* now wrought among them, yet the *Holy Ghost* was not come to be his *Advocate*, and plead his cause, and therefore could not as yet be blasphemed by them. By *Holy Ghost*, then, in our Saviour's language here, I suppose is meant all that was left still to be done for his justification; and that it is so wide a word in this place as to include in it the *Spirit* also. For he was speaking before of the *Spirit*, and therefore when he alters the phrase he doth not leave out the testimony of that, but embraces it within the compass of a larger word; which it was necessary to use, that he might show when that sin, which they had begun in a desperate manner, would be so complete that it never could be undone. And that was when the *Holy Ghost* had consecrated the apostles to their great office (which supposes his resurrection), and filled them with all divine gifts; among which, you know, was a power *to do greater works than these*[x], which our Saviour is here speaking of, called the *Spirit*. Then if they did not believe, there was no remedy, but they must perish in their infidelity. But, till then, they to whom our Saviour speaks were not arrived at this hopeless condition, because they had hitherto only blasphemed the *Spirit*, not the *Holy Ghost, which was*

[w] Matt. xii. 28. [x] John xiv. 12.

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not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. But when it was given, and they reproached that as they had done the *Spirit*, then they were under irrecoverable condemnation; there being nothing more to be done for the opening their eyes, and persuading them that Jesus was the Son of God. They had made a fair step to it in our Saviour's lifetime, by resisting the mighty power of the Spirit; but it was possible they might see their error, because there was still a more mighty power behind, which first raised up and glorified Jesus, and then enabled his apostles to do more wonderful things than he had done when he was on earth.

And therefore I observe, that afterward the word *Holy Ghost* is sometimes used in this large sense for all the power that was given the apostles, whether of prophecy and languages, or of healing and casting out devils, (which last are sometimes peculiarly called the *Spirit*,) and so not to be distinguished from the other, which it encloses. Thus the word *Holy Ghost*, in Heb. ii. 4, may be referred not only to *gifts* immediately preceding, but to *signs, wonders, and miracles* before mentioned. And after St. Peter and John had cured a lame man, they say the *Holy Ghost* was a witness to Jesus[y]. But though this word be so largely used in some places, (as *Spirit* also sometimes signifies all the rest[z], and sometimes all but that which is called *power*[a],) yet commonly you will find the word *Holy Ghost* having a peculiar reference to those other gifts of illumination, not of power, Acts iv. 8, v. 3, vii. 55, x. 44, 45, and especially xix. 2, 6, where you read that St. Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus who had not so much as heard whether there was any *Holy Ghost*, who had heard, no doubt, of the miraculous works both of Christ and his apostles. Now when these and the *Holy Ghost* were both joined together, when Jesus had given them the witness of his blood, and of his resurrection, and the gospel came *not only in power*, but in the *Holy Ghost*, as St. Paul speaks[b]; then they who persist to blaspheme the name of Jesus were in an hopeless condition, past all the methods of God to bring them to forgiveness. All which I have said, as distinctly as I could, to explain that which has perplexed so many, and to show the strength of this

[y] Acts v. 32. [z] ii. 4, 17. [a] 1 Cor. ii. 4. [b] 1 Thess. i. 5.

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witness: which our Saviour so much relied upon, that he knew not a greater to convince them, when once it had said all that it intended in his behalf. To which let this be added, as an argument of the greatness of this testimony, that they who apostatized from the Christian faith are therefore condemned to a sorer punishment than they who forsook Moses; not only because they accounted the *blood* of Jesus an unholy thing, and despised that witness, but also *did despite to the Spirit of grace*, which, by raising him from the dead, proved his *blood* to be the blood of the Son of God[c]. This is set down last of all in that place, because it filled up the measure of their sin. This made them uncapable of the benefit of any sacrifice for sin, (as it is ver. 26,) that they so slighted, yea, vilified and reproached, carried themselves contumeliously (as the word imports) towards the *Spirit* of God, which was the greatest testimony on earth that our Saviour had, and was followed with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And they must needs be guilty of such disgraceful usage of the *Spirit*, yea, of the *Spirit of grace*, that Spirit which God had so graciously poured, not only upon Jesus, but upon the apostles, and perhaps upon themselves, if they did deny Jesus and renounce his religion; because this was in effect to tell the world that this was not the Spirit of God, but of the devil, and that it did not prove his resurrection from the dead, but, whatsoever it said, he was a blasphemer when he called himself the *Son of God*.

Thus I have done now with this last witness on earth, the *Spirit:* which you see concurs and agrees with all the former in this truth. There is not the smallest difference between them, nothing to make us suspect them to be false witnesses, for they are all found (to speak in our vulgar phrase) in the very same story, punctually and in terms affirming this, that *Jesus is the Son of God*. This he preached, who never did any sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; this John Baptist likewise proclaimed with a loud voice; the blood of Jesus attested this before all the people; this was the very title over his cross, that he was *KING OF THE JEWS;* and this the *Spirit* said; it was the language of every one of his wonderful works; and of his resurrection also, and his enthronization, (of

[c] Heb. x. 29.

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which the Holy Ghost gave assurance,) which conspired to testify this, and expressly justified it to all the world. And therefore how can we choose but think this a sure word (that he is the Son of God) which is established out of the mouth, not of two or three, but of twice three witnesses, of unquestionable credit. And these three last treated of challenge from us a very careful consideration, and we ought the more duly to weigh what they say, because they were on earth; and upon that account nearer to us, as I told you, more evident at first sight, more strongly attested by innumerable witnesses, that they might serve for a greater confirmation, even of the truth of the rest. The testimony of the *Father* is certain, because it was heard by several excellent persons; yea, once by a multitude of people. That of the *Word* also is infallible, and we cannot, with any reason, doubt whether there was such evidence, because St. Stephen, St. Paul, St. John were persons of unspotted reputation, who heard it, and also did and suffered the hardest things upon the credit of it. That the *Holy Ghost* also fell upon him at his baptism, a great prophet so confidently affirmed, that it was profaneness to deny it. But yet, excepting the testimony of the *Holy Ghost* after his ascension, there were none of those witnesses in heaven heard by so many as these three last mentioned, who, as St. John says, *bare witness in earth.*

It was a notorious thing to all the country (which Jesus travelled) that he led a most holy life. No man could fasten the suspicion of any crime upon him, but the cry of the people was, like that when he opened a blind man's eyes, *He hath done all things well*[d]. And yet he lived not a retired life; he did not hide himself in corners, nor shut up himself in private houses; but conversed so freely, that they found fault with him (though unjustly) for being too familiar, and keeping company with publicans and sinners. And as for his *Blood*, the second witness on earth, that was shed in the face of the sun, at a great feast, when from foreign countries they were assembled at Jerusalem. All the accidents which we say attended his death were things that never have been contradicted. No man then had the impudence to deny the eclipse of the sun, the earthquake, the rending of the veil of the temple, and the

[d] Mark vii. 37.

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rest of the astonishing things that then happened. The first of them is mentioned by a Pagan writer[e]; and though the apostles published both that and all the other continually, yet there is no book, either of Jew or Gentile, (who were enemies great enough to his religion,) that goes about to disprove them. And as for his *miraculous works*, they were generally done openly, at feasts, in the synagogues, on the highways; and were so commonly talked of, that the rulers feared all the world would run after him[f]. Therefore the apostles could not falsify in the report of these things, but they might be easily confuted: which no man ever attempted, but both Jews and Gentiles acknowledged that he wrought miracles: for his apostles also wrought them every where, and so did their successors in some ages after. To these the ancient Christians appeal, as an undoubted testimony to their faith: which they could not be so silly as to mention, were there any dispute whether there had been miracles wrought or no. His *resurrection* also was attested by five hundred people, who saw him together at once; and it was proved beyond contradiction by the strange descent of those miraculous gifts upon his apostles according to his promise. Which came upon them also at a feast, when all the nation, though living in far distant countries, were assembled together, and a great company of proselytes also and devout people were present to be witnesses of it. Yea, the apostles themselves, as it is notoriously known, went over all the world, and openly showed the power of Jesus which was in them.

Now if all these be true witnesses, or rather if you grant there were such witnesses, which no sober man can deny, (they being visible here on earth, in the company of so much people,) there can be no doubt remaining of this, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* They proclaim this so loudly with one voice, that St. John had reason to say, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* They beheld it in his preaching and life; they beheld it in his bloody death, but especially in the power of his Spirit both before he died, and in raising him up from the dead: and they beheld it also when

[e] [Phlegon, whose testimony is preserved by Tertullian, Apol. cap. 21; Origen, Contr. Cels. lib. i. § 33. tom. i. p. 414; and Eusebius, in Chron. apud Hieron. tom. viii. col. 649.]

[f] John xii. 19.

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they were with him on the holy mount, and had the testimony of the rest of the heavenly witnesses: which were heard on earth, though they were in heaven; as men of high quality and of unblemished integrity, with the hazard of all they had, did constantly affirm. And though some of those heavenly witnesses might not be believed so much at the first, (which is the cause, I suppose, that our Saviour bids his apostles, as you have heard, not declare what the voice from heaven said till after his resurrection[e],) yet when they had received such great testimony, that they were good men, and men of God, by having the Holy Ghost bestowed on them, to bestow upon others also; and when by this they were able to demonstrate his resurrection; then all the rest that they alleged, as a proof that he was the Son of God, did highly merit belief also, and there was no reason to suspect the truth of such reports as were verified in so authentic a manner. For *with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*[f]. And the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was a powerful witness that there was nothing so great said of him by the voices from heaven, but it ought to be received as the undoubted truth of God: who at sundry times and in divers manners testified to his Son Jesus, that by some means or other the most obstinate hearts might be convinced, and those tongues which blasphemed him might confess him to be the Lord.

A PRAYER.

All thy works praise thee, O holy Jesus, they all show the greatness of thy power, and declare thee to be the Lord. All thy saints therefore ought to bless thee, and to speak good of thy name; who didst manifest forth thy glory in such miraculous works upon earth, and art now crowned with such glory and honour in the heavens. Great was the glory of that almighty love, which gave health to the sick, feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, and life to the dead. How gloriously didst thou triumph over the devil and all the powers of darkness; declaring thyself to be the Redeemer of the world, by delivering those who were oppressed by him! Great was thy majesty, and therefore greatly to be praised. Those triumphs ought to have been attended with the most joyful shouts of praise and thanks-

[e] Matt. xvii. 9. [f] Acts iv. 33.

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giving to thee, as the Saviour of men, and the Lord of men and angels. All that saw thy wonderful works ought with never-ceasing love to have glorified thee, the great Lover of mankind, the Repairer of our ruins, the Restorer of our happiness, our mighty Deliverer from all our enemies, and the inexhaustible Fountain of life and all other good things, which thou every where dispensedst to them.

How ought all our hearts now to overflow with love to thee, the blessings of whose goodness so overflowed in all places that none can tell the number of them! especially when we remember how, by the mighty working of the same Spirit which glorified thee so on earth, thou art raised from the dead, carried to heaven, set at the right hand of God, and made the King of glory. *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* This is the sovereign balsam of all our wounds! This is our solace and comfort in the greatest troubles! This raises our spirits when they are oppressed, and gives us life in death itself! Be thou honoured and acknowledged by me and by all mankind with the humblest, the most hearty and affectionate devotion to thy service. Be thou ever praised, as much as thou wast reproached and blasphemed. Let thy name be sweet, and mentioned with delight and joy throughout all the world. Live, O blessed Jesus, in the glory wherein thou art enthroned. Sit and reign there till all thine enemies become thy footstool. *For among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name: for thou art great, and hast done wondrous things: thou art Lord alone.*

O give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: O worship him in the beauty of holiness. Say among the heathen, The Lord reigneth; who was dead, but is alive again, and liveth for evermore. O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth: yea, sing unto the Lord a new song, and worship him, all ye gods. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods.

Blessed is the people that know this joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength, and by thy favour shall we be highly honoured. For thou hast a mighty arm, strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. I know that thou canst do every thing, and

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that no thought of thine can be hindered. Thou canst break the chains of death, and raise our dust and ashes to immortal life. Thou canst tread Satan under our feet, and send thy angels for our security and defence. By thee we shall run through the greatest dangers, and surmount all the difficulties that are in our way to thee. *Who shall separate us from thy love, O Christ, who diedst for us, yea rather, art risen again, who art even at the right hand of God, who also makest intercession for us?* O live thou for ever in my mind and heart, and be the daily delightful subject of my thoughts. Direct and guide me in all my ways, and lead me safe unto thyself. Still let my meditations of thee be sweet, and my joy exceeding great in thy salvation. Still fix mine eyes on things above, where thou art at God's right hand. Lord, still increase my faith, that it, growing in strength, may work by a more vigorous love. Let me feel the power of thy Holy Spirit perpetually in my heart; that being *led by the Spirit, and mortifying thereby the deeds of the body, he that raised thee up from the dead may also quicken my mortal body by his Spirit that dwelleth in me. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that wrought such wonders, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.* Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

Concerning the witness of the holy apostles of our Lord.

I KNOW not what remains to be done for the full explication of these words of the apostle, unless it be fit to note that our Saviour is said to *come* not only in his own person, but likewise in his apostles and evangelists. I need name but one place to prove this[8]:—*and came, and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.* It is well known that Jesus (of whom he there speaks) was *not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;* and therefore in his own person was not to go to those who were afar off, (such Gentiles as these Ephesians were,) to whom notwithstanding he is said here to come. *He came unto his own,* (saith this very disciple,) and though his own received him not, yet he kept himself within the confines of their country, and charged his disciples, during his life, not to go into any city of the Samaritans; to

[8] Ephes. ii. 17.

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whom he never went, but only in his passage from one part of the Jews' country to another. We can give no account then of his *coming to them that were afar off*, as well as unto the Jews *who were nigh*, but only this; that by the apostles whom he sent, and who were his ambassadors to preach the glad tidings of salvation, he was made known to the Gentiles; even as the Father is said to come to the Jews and to speak to them, when he sent him, his Son, to declare his mind and will among them.

Now it is possible that St. John might have some respect to his sending them (as the Father sent him) to prove him to be the Son of God, when he saith that Jesus *came by water, and by blood, and by the Spirit*, and that these three were *his witnesses on earth*. For, first, the apostles were his *witnesses*, as they are called in many places, both by him and themselves. *Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*, says our Saviour, just before his ascension[h]. The same he said to St. Paul, to whom he appeared afterward[i]. And in the same style St. Peter speaks of himself, *I exhort you, who am an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ*[k]. And as they were witnesses of his sufferings, so they were of all that he did (as you shall hear presently), and of all that was done for him to prove that he was the Son of God and the King of glory. That is, they were witnesses that there appeared such witnesses both in heaven and earth for him as we have examined. And (2) witnesses they were of very great credit, worthy of all belief. For they were *witnesses chosen of God*[l], select men, picked out by heaven, some of them in an extraordinary manner, for this purpose. And they spake nothing by hearsay, but upon their own certain knowledge, being *eyewitnesses of his majesty*, as ye have heard before from St. Peter[m]. And St. John says the same in this Epistle[n], *We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*. First they saw, and then bare witness; or as he expresses himself more largely in the beginning of the Epistle, *That which they had heard, and seen with their eyes, and looked upon, and which their hands had handled of the Word*

[h] Acts i. 8. [i] xxvi. 16; xxii. 15. [k] 1 Pet. v. 1. [l] Acts x. 41.
[m] 2 Pet. i. 16. [n] 1 John iv. 14.

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of life (*for it was manifest, and they saw it and bare witness*): *that* (he repeats it again) *which they had seen and heard, they declared* unto the world. Why should not such witnesses be believed, who spake nothing but what all their senses, that could be employed in this case, gave them full assurance was undoubtedly true? They were men sure of common capacity; and they had opportunity also to see and hear and feel and examine every thing which Jesus did, or was done in honour of him. For therefore our Saviour chose them to be his witnesses, because they were thus qualified. *When the Comforter is come, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning*[o]: that is, because you are abundantly informed how all things have passed, from my very first entering into the world to preach the gospel; therefore you shall be employed to testify all things that you have seen and heard and felt, as the fittest persons to be believed. For which reason, when they wanted one of their number by the apostasy of Judas, they were very careful, according to this rule of their Master, to choose such an one to succeed him as had been a constant follower of Jesus, and had taken notice of every thing they were to witness. *Wherefore*, saith St. Peter, *of those men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection*[p]. See here how exact they were in their choice, that there might be no exception taken against their testimony, if any one should ask them. Did you yourself see, or did you hear this, which you report? They would have none to take a part with them in this chief ministry of the gospel, but such an one as had been with them from first to last, and was able to answer to such a question upon his own certain knowledge, that all was true that he preached. From them the evangelists received their lesson; who could say that they had these things which they reported from those very men who were present when they were spoken or done: and some of the evangelists, who were

[o] John xv. 26, 27. [p] Acts i. 21, 22.

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of the seventy disciples chosen by our Saviour[q], could affirm all upon the credit of their own sight or hearing. But the other was sufficient, as St. Luke thought; who, undertaking to write the history of our Saviour's life and death and resurrection, (though he was none of the twelve apostles,) says, that he intended to declare those things *which were most surely believed among them*, even as they were delivered to him by those persons who *from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word*[r]. Where it is observable, that as he would trust only such persons as had been eyewitnesses, so none but those who had been such witnesses from the beginning. And (3) what it was that they witnessed (which is to be next considered) I have already told you in their own words, *all that Jesus did from the beginning*, and particularly his resurrection, which concluded all. This you may observe they testified to the Jews, how God had honoured him by *miracles, wonders and signs which he wrought by him in the very midst of them, as they could not deny:* and *this Jesus*, saith St. Peter, *hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses*[s]. And so he preached to the Gentiles, as I have noted before[t]: *We are witnesses of all things which he did, &c. whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly unto witnesses chosen before of God, even unto us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.* And so does St. Paul[u], *But God raised him from the dead, and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.* He alleges their testimony, I suppose, rather than his own, (though he also had seen the Lord[x],) because they had been with him *from the beginning:* which he had not; but *was born out of due time*, or was *an abortive*, as the word is well rendered in the margin of that place now quoted. He was not formed, that is, and fashioned as the rest of the apostles were, under our Saviour's discipline, nor grew by leisurely instruction in the Christian religion to the dignity of an apostle, as children come by degrees to perfection and maturity in their mother's womb; but was thrust into the church on a sudden, and by an heavenly violence, not in a regular

[q] Luke x. 1. [r] i. 1, 2. [s] Acts ii. 22, 32. [t] x. 39, 41.
[u] xiii. 30, 31. [x] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

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way, made an apostle when he was not at all disposed for it. Being born an apostle therefore thus late (after Christ's ascension) and thus hastily, (before he was informed by any teacher of Christianity,) he could not say that he had seen all the wonderful works of Christ when he was alive, or heard his sermons, or received the history of them from eye and ear-witnesses. But all this was supplied by this one wonderful work of his conversion, in such a manner as I formerly described, and by those instructions which he received immediately from Jesus himself. This was so strange a thing that it made him one of his prime ministers; because the gospel which he preached *he neither received it of man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ:* who so fully satisfied and informed him, that there was no need to consult any mortal creature, nor to go for instructions or authority to those who were apostles before him; but immediately he went about his business, and became *his witness to all men of what he had seen and heard:* as you may read Gal. i. 12, 16, 17; Acts xxii. 15. And both he and the rest (which is the chief thing to be considered) asserted that which they preached, that is, proved Jesus *to be the Son of God with power,* all these ways by which St. John says our Saviour came, *by water, by blood, and by the Spirit:* as will be evident, if I give you but a brief account of every one of these.

1. And as for the holiness and purity of their doctrine, I have given you an abstract of it before: by which it is apparent they taught nothing but such a love of God as made those that learned it the greatest and most virtuous lovers of all mankind: whom they pursued with kindnesses, even when they hated them; and prayed for and blessed when they persecuted them and drove them away, and would no longer receive any of their other kindnesses. For they were instructed by the apostles to bear all injuries with perfect patience; to be contented with the present, and trust God for the future; to live peaceably with the worst natured people, and to exercise the divinest friendship with those who were good: whom they taught to *be all of one mind,* as much as the best husbands and wives are, *to have compassion one of another, to be loving, pitiful, and courteous;* as you may read in 1 Pet. iii. 7, 8.

The rest of their precepts were like these; and their lives

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were correspondent: as all the world knew, who could never charge them with any fault but this (as they accounted it), that they preached Jesus. There was nothing appeared that could give the smallest suspicion of any base or unworthy design, which they hid under pious and holy words. But their conversation had been very innocent and unblameable in the places where they lived when they were private men. None could charge them with forgery, theft, covetousness, or any other crime. But St. Paul, for instance, a most eminent person among them, was of such strictness, during the time he was a Jew, that he was blameless as to the righteousness which their law required. And when they were drawn out of their obscure privacy, and sent as public persons to preach and act in the name of Jesus, they were so far from serving any worldly ends, that they took nothing for all their pains, nor demanded one farthing for any of their cures. They were able not only to challenge all the world, as that great prophet Samuel had done his nation, that the man would come forth and witness against them, and say, if he could, whom they had wronged, but of whom they had expected any gratuity for all their kindness to them. That was all that Samuel said, *Whose ox or ass have I taken? whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe? and I will restore it to you*[y]: and Moses, in that great rebellion against him, thinks it sufficient to purge himself in the same manner, saying, *I have not taken one ass from them, nor hurt one of them*[z]. But St. Paul makes a more noble protestation, saying, *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me*[a]. Here was virtue; which made him so far even from desiring any thing of others, that he chose, by his own hard labour, to be both his own benefactor and his family's. And what he affirms of himself he also tells us was the pious inclination of several of his companions; such as Silvanus and Timotheus: whose exhortation, the Thessalonians knew, *was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor of guile; for they studied not to please men, but God. Unto whom they appeal as their wit-*

[y] 1 Sam. xii. 3. [z] Num. xvi. 15. [a] Acts xx. 33, 34.

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ness, that they never used any flattering words, nor sought to enrich themselves, or to advance their own glory, as you read 1 Thess. ii. 3—5. And *they were witnesses*, he adds, *as well as God, how holily, and justly, and unblameably*[b], *yea, how lovingly* (as it follows[c]) *they behaved themselves among them.*

Now, what should tempt such pious men, who so much despised worldly goods, and sought not to get any credit to themselves, to preach that Jesus was *the Son of God*, if they had not been very sure of this truth, which was the constant matter of their sermons throughout the world? Is it like that such men should feign a story of things which they never heard nor saw? that all their talk of voices from heaven, and miracles, and appearances of Jesus to them after he was dead, were only devices and contrivances of their own brain? For what end, I beseech you, should they invent them? If their tongues were so well hung, and they were so eloquent as to hope to persuade the world to be of their mind, it had been wisdom to have employed them more for their own gain and advantage, and not to have preached such a strange and unprofitable doctrine as this of the crucified Jesus. There were far easier tasks to undertake than this, and which would have turned to a better account here on earth; and therefore they who had so much wit as to invent would have let this alone, had they not known it to be both sure and undoubted, and also worthy of all their pains to reveal it, that this crucified Jesus was the Son of God.

But besides this, it ought to be considered, that from the very beginning our Saviour had taught them to be content with a mean and poor kind of life when he sent them forth to preach in Judæa. *Go*, says he[d], *preach and say, The kingdom of God is at hand.* Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor so much as a brass token in your purses; nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats; neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat; and eat such things as they set before you: that is, be not curious, and doubt not of it, God will provide for you. Was it likely that men thus bred to so great plainness, simplicity, contentedness, and dependence on God, should

[b] 1 Thess. ii. 10. [c] Ver. 11. [d] Matt. x. 7–10.

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go about to abuse the world with false stories? Nay, before they came to him, their education and way of life was so low and poor, that they were the unfittest men in the world to devise and make romances, if they should have had a mind to it. This was the very thing the heathens objected to them, that they were illiterate, not trained up in study, but got their living many of them *piscatorio artificio*, as they speak in Lactantius[e], 'by the trade and labour of fishing.' Of which he makes this advantage very justly in his reply to them, *Abfuit ergo ab his fingendi voluntas*, &c. "You must needs confess therefore that these men had not the inclination nor the craft to contrive and feign such a story as this, because they were so rude. Or what unlearned man is there that can devise things so coherent, and that suit so well one with another? since even the most excellent of all your philosophers, as we see plainly, have involved themselves in many contradictions, and spoken things contrary and repugnant to what they have elsewhere delivered: for this is the nature of lies, that they never hang well together. One end of the tale is wont to discover the falseness of the other. But what they deliver, *undique quadrat*, perfectly agrees with itself from top to bottom, because it is true, and no device of their own." And then, he adds, (which is the greatest evidence that can be of their honesty,) "they could not invent this for the sake of any thing in this world, (and without some such respect what should incline them to invent it?) forasmuch as they both taught and followed that course of life which regarded not sensual pleasures, and undervalued those things which the world admires and cries up for goods; and likewise they died for the faith, which was not the effect of a rash and sudden fit of zeal, for they knew very well, and foretold they should die upon this account; and they also resolvedly suffered the most cruel and sharpest torments that could be devised before they died; and they took it all patiently, nay, gave God thanks that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus."

But this belongs to the testimony of their *blood*. To which, before I proceed, let me observe that the apostles were not only men of great knowledge in the things of God, and very innocent and holy in their lives, but they were men extraordi-

[e] Lib. v. Inst. c. 2. [tom. i. p. 366.] [f] [Ibid. cap. 3.]

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narily qualified in both those regards; and therefore are the more to be believed in what they say they saw or heard. For what philosopher ever spake so plainly and clearly of all things that concern the amendment of mankind, or gave them such hopes in the world to come, without which it was not likely they should amend, as these poor fishermen did? They wanted nothing but their eloquence, which they purposely avoided; because they would have naked truth prevail by its own force and by the power of God, and not by those ornaments and dressings which had been so often employed to commend falsehood to the world. Setting this aside, there was no comparison between the doctrine of the apostles and that which had been formerly published. They comprehend in a few plain and simple words more than all that could be found here and there scattered in the vast volumes of the philosophers. Nay, they advanced the sense of the law of Moses: they called men to the noblest degree of purity; for they cleansed and scoured them from all filthiness, not only of the flesh, but also of the Spirit: they advanced the business of holy living to such a pitch, that some said it was impossible to be so good. And what did they do now? How did they overcome this objection? This is the greatest marvel of all, and gave their testimony a mighty force: they showed by their own example that it was possible. This, says Lactantius, made the philosophers miscarry in their design, that though they spake well, yet they did not live as they taught: for men had rather have examples than words; because it is easy to talk, and hard to do. Our Saviour therefore and his apostles convinced men by their actions, that if they would not follow one that taught them, they might follow one that went before them. They guided them by their feet, and not only by their tongues; they led their hearers the way in all manner of virtuous and godly living. Nay, they refused sometimes to do those things which they might lawfully, that all men might see their upright meaning, and that they had no worldly design in their head. So St. Paul tells the Corinthians, that whereas he might have lived upon the gospel and expected maintenance from them, yet he chose to preach freely, and *make the gospel without charge,* that it might have an easier passage into their hearts[f].

[f] 1 Cor. ix. 12, 18.

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And thus he did at Thessalonica also, where he *wrought with labour and travail night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any of them; not because he had not power* to do otherwise, *but to make himself an example unto them to follow him*[g]. And such was his practice, you heard before, at Ephesus[h]: so that one would think he had taken up this generous resolution at the very first, which he continued every where, not to make the smallest advantage by the gospel of which he was a minister. It might have been sufficient, one would think, that he laboured in the gospel, and took pains to convert souls: he needed not have laboured also for his living, but expected food from those whom he fed with the bread of life. But to make his ministry unexceptionable, and to show he intended nothing in the world but to bring men to this belief in Jesus; he would not so much as support himself by their contributions, but by the labour of his own hands provided both for himself and for others too, as he tells the Ephesian elders, who were instruments with him of their salvation. Can there be any suspicion of the sincerity of such a man as this? What could he have in his mind but this one thing, to win disciples to his Master? and could he doubt, think you, of his power to reward him for all his labour? He was no fool, it is plain, but understood himself as well as the wisest of us all. What should make him then neglect all other interests, and bend his mind wholly to serve Jesus? Such noble spirits as his were the unlikeliest of all other to cheat and deceive, whose only business it was to take pains that they might give to others. And men of such wisdom would not have taken all that pains for no other end but merely to persuade others to believe in Jesus, if they had not been as sure that he was the *Son of God*, as it was that they should get nothing by preaching it but stripes, imprisonments, infamy, reproaches, and perhaps lose their lives to the bargain. And what should make men so prodigal of their blood, think you?

II. That is now fit to be considered in the next place; their sharp sufferings, the *Blood* whereby our Saviour *came*, (that is, was proved to be the Christ), when he was preached by their ministry. No sooner did they appear, but all the world with its whole power armed itself against them. As the Jews under

[g] 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9. [h] Acts xx. 34.

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pretence of religion opposed and persecuted them; so when they fled into other countries, the philosophers upon the same score set their wits against them, and summoned all their learning and their arts of reasoning to dispute this new doctrine out of doors. To whose assistance came the sophisters and rhetoricians, who employed all their quirks and their eloquence to make it seem ridiculous. Nor did the magicians and jugglers, with all the demons, the then lords of the world, forget to oppose it with all their might; but excited kings, and presidents, and magistrates to exercise all kind of cruelties, not only against the preachers of this religion, but against their followers. The edicts of princes thundered out nothing but confiscations, proscriptions, banishments, imprisonment, rods, axes, strapadoes, crosses, fire, wild beasts: so that we may say of them all, as it was said of St. Paul and Barnabas, who were *men that hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus*[i]; men *set forth, appointed unto death* (as those that fought with wild beasts), *and made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and men*[k]. *Even unto this present hour* (says St. Paul in the following verses) *we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and buffetted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat* (God for them); *we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.* And as they were long thus vilely used and destined to death, so at last every one of them, together with other great servants of Jesus Christ, actually suffered death in justification of this truth, that he was *the Son of God.* St. Stephen led the way, who is called the *martyr of Jesus,* having shed his *blood* for him[l]. And he that calls him so protests that he was *ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for his name*[m]. Nay, when he speaks of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, he was in the hands of his enraged enemies, who were ready to stone him too, and began to prepare themselves for it, as you may read there[n]. And both before and after this he was persecuted with such violent and bitter zeal, that his whole life was a kind of death, which he suffered over and over again for his

[i] Acts xv. 26. [k] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [l] Acts xxii. 20. [m] xxi. 13. [n] xxii. 23.

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Master's cause. Which makes him say, when he gives a large catalogue of his sufferings, that he was *in deaths often*[o]; and protest in another place that *he died daily*[p]; and in another, that he was *alway delivered unto death for Jesus his sake*, and that *death wrought in him*, that he might make others live[q]. More than this you find in Rev. xvii. 5, 6, that the mother of harlots, that one city, *Babylon*, was even *drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*. A sea of *Blood* flowed from their veins, to cover the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; for whose cause they suffered themselves to be slain, as so many innocent sheep that make no resistance. This gave them the name of *Martyrs*, in English *Witnesses*, because *they were beheaded for the Witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God*[r]: that is, they constantly affirmed him to be the *Lord*, and chose rather to die and seal it with their *Blood*, than not preach this truth; for which St. John also was now an exile in a desolate place[s].

What was it, think you, that made them thus hot and eager to be the most miserable of all mankind? to despoil themselves of all the comforts of life, and to endure perpetually the pains of death? From what cause was it that their blood thus boiled in their veins, and they were so zealously forward to have it let out? It could be nothing but only this, that they loved Jesus ardently, and were extremely desirous, if he thought it best, to die in his service: knowing that he would hear the cry of their *blood*, and reward them abundantly for all their sufferings. St. John beheld *the souls of those who were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held, under the altar*[t]; which signifies that they were sacrifices to God, when they witnessed thus unto Jesus. For by *souls* in the language of the old Scriptures is often meant the *blood*[u], i. e. the life, which here was represented at the foot of the altar, where the blood of the sacrifice used to be poured out. They died in an holy cause, they were well assured, and should be an offering well-pleasing, and of a sweet savour unto God; else they would never have thus willingly offered their throats to

[o] 2 Cor. xi. 23, 25.
[p] 1 Cor. xv. 31.
[q] 2 Cor. iv. 11, 12.
[r] Rev. xx. 4. [s] i. 9. [t] vi. 9.
[u] [Bishop Patrick brings forward his reasons for retracting this opinion, in the continuation of the present work, part ii. chap. 12. § 2.]

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the sacrificing knife of their bloody prosecutors. No, when it came to that, they would have confessed the truth sure, if they had not preached it before. A few of their sufferings would have taught them more wit than to *lose their heads for the testimony of Jesus;* if they had not been verily persuaded they were in the right, and ought to be his *Witnesses* even with their blood. The scoffs of the heathen would have been very reasonable, if they had not dealt sincerely, and been certain their testimony was the truth: who were wont to say, as we read in Minutius [u], *Nec resurgitis, miseri, nec interim vivitis,* 'Miserable wretches! you do but fancy you shall rise again, and in the mean time you do not live.' You are hungry, and pale, and enjoy none of the pleasures of life; and have no hope of being better when you are dead. To which he replies, after a long demonstration of the evidence they had of what they believed, *Ita beati resurgimus, et futuri contemplatione jam vivimus* [x]. 'So you see we shall rise again to blessedness, and we live now in the blissful contemplation of it.' Yea, they not only *lived,* but they *rejoiced:* and more than that, they *gloried* in tribulations; which they could not have done, had not their integrity been as great as this confidence, and their sincere intentions upheld and supported their boldness: which was the greater, you may be sure, because, as they bare *witness* to Jesus, so *God bare witness to them,* as you read expressly [y], *both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will:* whereby he testified to them that they were honest men, and did not *follow cunningly devised fables, when they made known to men the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; but were,* as the professed, *eye-witnesses of his majesty.* Which is the next thing to be considered.

III. Hitherto I have only proved that they had all things necessary to make them *credible witnesses;* being void of guile, and such as could not be reasonably supposed to be mere inventors of what they preached: men who both knew what they said, and did not speak contrary to their knowledge. Nay, men of eminent knowledge, sanctity and zeal, which made them more than *common witnesses.* But still they were only *human* witnesses, not *divine:* nor could all this put it quite

[u] [Octav. cap. 12.] [x] [Cap. 38.] [y] Heb. ii. 4.

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out of doubt, and give a full assurance that what they said was true; but only that they thought it to be true, and were not likely to be deceived. And therefore that they and those who heard their testimony might be sure, and have infallible proofs (as St. Luke's words are) that they were not deceived; and that the faith which relied upon their testimony might be divine; there followed the *witness of the Spirit*, which accompanied them, as it had done our Saviour; together with the witness of the *Holy Ghost*, which he had promised to send them, that they might be his *witnesses* in all the world. This was an undoubted evidence that they were men sent of God upon this message, to preach Jesus, and testify that he was the Lord of all. This made the faith of those who heard and believed them to be more than an human persuasion, because it relied not only on the word of men, but upon the testimony of the Spirit of God. It might have been a very strong faith without this, because the men who reported it were persons of great virtue, void of all fraud or worldly design: but it could not have been divine, had not this witness come and joined its testimony with theirs. For they would but have received the testimony of very pious and good men: it was no more, till the testimony of God himself came, in such signs, wonders, miracles, and various gifts, as you have heard already, and as you read of in many other places. *They went forth* (saith St. Mark, speaking of all the apostles) *and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word* (which they preached) *with signs following*[z]. All places were filled with wonder, as they were with the *Holy Ghost*. At Jerusalem, for instance, St. Stephen, as well as the apostles, *full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people*[a]. In Samaria St. Philip preached Christ, *and the people with one accord gave heed to the things which he spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did; for unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed*[b]. And at Thessalonica, St. Paul tells them that *his gospel came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*[c]. And at Ico-

[z] Mark xvi. 20. [a] Acts vi. 8. [b] viii. 6, 7. [c] [1 Thess. i. 5.]

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nium both he and Barnabas stayed a long time, *speaking boldly in the Lord, who gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands*[c]. And in the same manner at Corinth, Colosse, Philippi, and all other places, the divine power *wrought in them mightily*[d]: upon which account they call themselves, with great reason, *witnesses of God*[e]. *If Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, yea, and we are found false witnesses of God,* (which had been a most horrible thing,) *because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ.* They testified every where what God had done by Jesus and for him; particularly that he had raised him from the dead. Now that they did not take upon them to be *God's witnesses,* when they had received no authority from him, nor were guilty of belying God (as the phrase κατὰ θεοῦ imports) the Spirit that wrought in them evidently proved, by the gifts of languages, of prophecy, of wisdom and knowledge, of miracles, and healing all manner of diseases. Which made the angel say, when St. John was going to worship him, By no means, *see thou do it not:* I am but thy fellow-servant, one of thy brethren that *bears witness* to Jesus as thou dost: *for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*[f]: that is, those gifts which the apostles were endued withal showed whose ministers they were, and that being the servants of the most high God, as well as the angels, they owed no such respect to them as St. John was about to give: and by those divine gifts they gave a *testimony* to Jesus, and proved he was the Son of God; wherein they were equal to the angels, who could no more than testify to him, and be his ministers to report the glory wherein he was. Upon which errand not only this, but many other angels appeared to St. John, who, together with the rest of the apostles, *bare record of the word of God,* as I have noted before, *and of the testimony of Jesus, and of all things that he saw*[g]. And herein they were *labourers together with God*[h], who testified the same, and *wrought as effectually* in St. Peter among the Jews, as he was *mighty* in St. Paul *towards the Gentiles*[i]. For *God wrought special miracles by his hands*[k]; *and made the Gentiles obe-*

[c] Acts xiv. 3. [d] Col. i. 29. [e] 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15. [f] Rev. xix. 10.
[g] Rev. i. 2. [h] 1 Cor. iii. 9. [i] Gal. ii. 8. [k] Acts xix. 11.

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dient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God[l]. So that the faith of that age, it is plain, *did not stand in the wisdom of men* (as St. Paul speaks[m]), *but in the power of God.* They that believed saw evidently that God was with the apostles: nay, they felt, many of them, the power of God in themselves, as you have heard before; when the apostles communicated this virtue to others, which they had received from Jesus Christ. Which was such a *testimony* to him, as no counterfeit or false witness could ever imitate.

For it hath been a constant observation, that they who by magic astonished the people by wonderful feats, not only did them for their own gain and reputation rather than for any benefit to the world, but also kept this secret to themselves, and would not communicate their power to others. That would have spoiled their trade, and made them less admired, or at least less rich than they designed. But our Lord, on the contrary, had promised his disciples that what he did when he was in the world they should do also after he was gone. Nay, more than that, he tells them, *Greater things shall ye do.* And, which is still more, he promises that not only they, but others also should do those works if they believed on him: *Believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father*[n]. Now thus it came to pass, as our Saviour foretold. Not only the apostles, but others also who believed through their word received the Holy Ghost. For as St. Peter confidently invited his crucifiers to come and repent of what they had done, and *be baptized every one of them in his name, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*[o]; so it proved, *that they who gladly received his word were baptized*[p], *and were all filled with the Holy Ghost*[q]. This was the thing that amazed that famous sorcerer Simon Magus, whom the Samaritans admired as *the great power of God,* till St. Philip came thither, and persuaded even him, by the miracles and signs which he did, to believe in Jesus, as a greater power of God than himself. But when the apostles also came, and by laying

[l] Rom. xv. 18, 19. [m] 1 Cor. ii. 5. [n] John xiv. 11, 12.
[o] Acts ii. 38. [p] Ver. 41. [q] iv. 31.

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on of their hands the Holy Ghost was given to several persons, he plainly saw that he was nobody, and would have given any money for such a power as he had not the least shadow of[r].

But all that I shall say of this matter shall be out of one of the ancient defenders of the Christian cause, who thought he might challenge all the world to show him any thing like that which our Saviour did, or give an account how it might be done if he was not the Son of God most high. It is Arnobius[s] I mean, who in his first book against the Gentiles, having delivered in a catalogue of our Saviour's miracles, and shown they could not be the effect of magic, at last concludes with this great demonstration, the substance of which I shall briefly relate: "All these wonders which I have summed up, though not as the greatness of them required, Jesus not only performed himself, but, which is a greater miracle, gave many others power to do them in his name. For he foreseeing there would be endeavours to detract from the glory of his famous actions, that he might leave no suspicion in the minds of those that heard of him, as if he were a sorcerer, chose out of that vast multitude of people that followed him with no small admiration, certain fishermen, poor labourers, and other country people, who going through all nations might, without any tricks, false colours, or invoking the assistance of spirits, work all those miracles over again which they said he had wrought himself. As he commanded devils to come out with a word of his mouth; in the same manner did they lay their commands upon them, and they obeyed. As he did put forth his hand and touch a leper, or bid him be clean, and his flesh was restored like a little child's; in the same manner did they smooth the skins of such loathsome persons, and restore them to the welcome society of their friends and neighbours. It would be too tedious to number all things particularly that they did, and, which is more (I may add), gave power to other Christians to do in their Master's name. They stopped the progress of cruel eating cancers; they closed up *ulcera oris immensi*, 'wide and very gaping ulcers;' they gave feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, and life to the dead. Nor was there any thing that astonished all beholders done by him, which he did not subject

[r] Acts viii. 10, 11, &c. [s] [Max. Bibl. vet. Patr. tom. iii. p. 437.]

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to the power of these infants, these rustics, and gave them authority to do it. What say you now, O ye incredulous, ye hard, ye obstinate hearts? Did your Jupiter himself ever give any mortal man such power? Did he ever so much as bestow upon his high-priest, upon the most sacred of all his high-priests, I will not say the power to raise a dead man, or make a blind man see, but so much as to make a wheal or a pimple sink down and lie even with the skin by speaking a word, or cure a little cleft which a loose skin sometimes makes at the finger's end, only by touching it or bidding it be angry no longer? And was it an human power then from which such great things as I have told you of proceeded? Sure it was sacred, sure it was divine; or, if you will admit any more superlative expression, it was more than divine, more than sacred. For when thou dost that which thou art able to do, and which is proportionable to thy power and strength, there is no such reason that admiration should cry out; thou didst that which thou hadst strength to do, and which one might expect from such a power. But now to be able to transfer thy right and power to another, and to make a frail weak creature do that which is proportionable to thy might alone; this is the effect of a power which is above all, and which contains in it the causes of all things and the natures of all faculties. Go then and fetch us Zoroastres, that great magician you brag of, through the torrid zone; or go and bring hither the Armenian that Ctesias writ of; nay, summon Apollonius, Damigero, Dardanus, and all the rest of your most eminent wonder-workers that ever were; let them be gathered together and join their forces, and let us see them give but one of the common people power to command by a plain word a dumb man to speak, or a man whose arms and legs are withered to work and walk. Or, if this be too difficult a thing, to make another do this, and do it with a simple command, let us see any of them do it themselves. And let them call in the assistance of all their demons, let them gather all the magical herbs which they can find in the bosom of the earth, and come with the whole power of their murmuring words, and with all their charms, (we will except none of them, we forbid them nothing that they can get to aid them,) and let them try, if, with the help of all their gods to boot, they can do any such thing as these poor rustic

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Christians effected *nudis jussionibus*, 'by their naked and bare command.' Cease, O ye ignorant souls, therefore to scoff and to curse when ye hear of these things; which cannot hurt him at all, but will bring no small prejudice to yourselves. For the soul is a precious thing; nothing ought to be so dear to a man as that, which is in hazard by blaspheming Christ: who is no such contemptible person that you may laugh at him, but, as appears by these things, *Deus ille sublimis*, &c. 'that high God, God of God, God from unknown kingdoms, God sent by the most high to be the Saviour; whom neither the sun himself, nor the brightest stars, (if they have any sense,) nor the principalities and rulers of the world, no, nor your great gods, or those who feigning themselves to be gods terrify all mankind with their formidable power, could so much as know or suspect whence or what he was, he is so great.' But now that it is known, and he hath demonstrated it to the world by his divine works, you had best submit to him, and not imagine he is but one of us."

And that truly is good counsel for us all, to acknowledge Jesus to be the Lord, and, submitting ourselves to his authority, to be governed by his laws, which God from heaven confirmed by the most miraculous operations of the Spirit, and of the Holy Ghost. It is true we do not see and hear those things of which the apostles and they that lived in their days were spectators and auditors, but we have the faithful records of those miraculous works and of their sermons left by themselves. Registers were delivered under the unquestionable hands of those divine men, of what they had seen and heard, and of what they themselves said and did: that is, the testimony of the apostles and the testimony of God was preserved and kept in the holy books, which spake the same to the next age which their fathers had seen with their eyes and heard with their ears in the age foregoing. And moreover, for a further confirmation, that these were the lively oracles of God, (his word transmitted unto them, on which they might rely,) they had a continuance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost for some ages following. As Justin Martyr and Tertullian witness for the second age after our Saviour; and Origen, Minutius, Arnobius, and Lactantius (to name no more in succeeding times) witness for the third and part of the fourth. How could they

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doubt of the truth of the reports which they had received, when they beheld them still verified, as much as was necessary in their own days, by the testimony of God himself? And as for the incredulous Gentiles who stopped their ears to these reports, they pressed them very strongly in this manner, (to use the words that follow in Arnobius[t],) as we may do those who question or disbelieve the evangelical history in our own age. "Will you not believe good witnesses of things that were done, unless you see them done yourselves? Shall authors of certain credit be rejected, who received such things themselves, and delivered them to their posterity to be believed with no small approbation? You will say, who are those? I answer, whole countries, people, nations, all that incredulous race of mankind, are our witnesses and the authors we produce: who would never have entertained these things, unless they had been clearer, as we say, than the light. Do you think that the men of that time were such vain lying fools, such sots, such brutes, that they feigned and imagined they saw such things as they never saw? and that they childishly affirmed such things were done, when there was nothing like it? and when they might have lived with you in good esteem, and contracted alliances and kindred among you, would choose to become the public hatred, and to make their very name execrable without any reason for it? If this story be false, whence comes all the world to be filled so soon with this religion? Or how was it brought about that so many people in such distant countries and of such different humours should all conspire and agree together to believe it? Were they drawn away with mere words? and with the danger of their lives followed a poor despicable preacher, when they saw nothing that was wonderful or strange to persuade them to this worship? What vain, senseless imaginations are these? Therefore they believed and suffered themselves to be torn in pieces rather than deny it, because they saw all these things done by him and by his preachers; who were sent through the whole world to carry the benefits of our Father to mankind, and to bestow the gifts of healing both on their souls and bodies.

"But our writers have not set these things down faithfully. They have extolled small matters, and ambitiously magnified

[t] [Ibid. p. 438.]

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them beyond their just proportions! Why so, I beseech you? By what reason shall we believe any of your writings, if this history of ours must be rejected? in which but a few things, of the many that were done, are recorded by men of truth and honesty. Did any God come down from heaven, and write with his own hand the stories that you believe? Or is there any thing of that nature writ against ours? Then you believe men, and so do we. Your books were writ by men, and so were ours. And whatsoever you will say of ours, look for the same to be retorted upon your own. Will you have all things contained in your writings to be true? so are all contained in ours. Do you say ours are false? the same we say of yours. And how will you help yourselves? You cannot say that you saw the things that you believe no more than we: but others saw them, and therefore you believe them, and so do we. But ours were writ by rude and unlearned men, and therefore not to be believed! Consider if this be not an advantage to our cause, and a stronger reason to conclude that these writings are stained with no lies, but delivered with a simple mind, ignorant how to amplify things, and so set them off with deceitful dresses." As for that which follows concerning the trivial sordid style wherein they said the apostles writ, it does not in the least render the faithfulness of their relations suspected; and therefore I pass it over, and omit his reply to it, though I cannot well neglect this pertinent observation of Erasmus in his Preface to his Paraphrase upon St. Luke's Gospel[u]. "The language," says he, "of the gospel is so simple and rude, that if anybody compare it with the history of Thucydides or Livy, he will want abundance of things, and be offended at as many. How many things do the evangelists pass by! How many do they but just touch in two or three words! In how many places do they disagree in the order of their narration! and in how many others do they seem to thwart one another! These things might make a reader less like them, and not give such credit to what he reads. For, on the contrary, they that wrote human histories, how solicitous were they about their entrance upon their work! How scrupulously did they weigh their words! What care did they employ to observe a decent order, to set down nothing but what was

[u] [Tom. vii. col. 277.]

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plausible and exactly described! And with what art do they endeavour to set things lively before our eyes! With what pleasures do they entice and detain the minds of the readers, that they may not at all grow weary of them! And yet these elaborate monuments, for the greatest part, are lost; and those that remain are not read with any assurance that they report nothing but the truth. For who is so credulous as to believe that Titus Livius tells never a tale in his history? But there are millions of men found, who had rather die ten times than think there is one sentence false in the evangelical story. Is it not plain by this that it is not a business of human power and prudence, but conducted by a divine virtue?" . . . "What philosopher is there that ever had the confidence to propound such paradoxes as these with hope to be believed?—that one Jesus was crucified, and by his death saved mankind; that he was God and man, born of a virgin; that he rose again from the dead, and sits at the right hand of God the Father; that he taught they were blessed men who mourned, hungered and thirsted, were afflicted, ill spoken of, and killed for the profession of his name; and that one day they should live again, and see him sit in judgment to give immortality to the pious, and endless pains to the ungodly. What is there plausible and taking in all this? And yet the humble low style of the gospel persuaded men of this, so that thousands, millions, will rather forsake their lives than this plain truth: which a few private, unknown, poor, mean disciples of his delivered to the world."

What should move us then to distrust these records of the faithful witnesses of Christ, which are come down to us, through the hands of all ages since, so as they were delivered to them? What do we see now, more than our forefathers did in Arnobius his days, or those which succeeded, that gives us any cause to suspect their truth? Are they altered from what they were? If any company of men had been so bold as to venture at such a change, they would first have mended the style, no doubt, and placed things in greater order and method, according to the exactest rules of art. But that they are untainted and uncorrupted, and in no material passage vary from what they were in former ages, appears by what all Christian writers have transcribed out of them into their books, which agrees with that which we now read. They are the same now

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that ever they were: they contain a relation of those things which converted, as Arnobius says, the incredulous world; who did not want wit nor learning no more than we; but saw great reason to renounce all the fables which had been told of their gods, and to believe what they read here concerning Jesus. For it is the testimony of God Almighty, they evidently perceived, that is recorded in those books. Which when we receive, our faith will not be less divine than theirs in the first age; because we both receive the *witness of God;* only they saw or heard it, and we read the record of what they saw and heard: which makes no considerable difference in the nature of the testimony. For the testimony of any man standing upon allowed record is as good an evidence as if he were alive in person to give it. No man loses his cause when his witnesses die, if they have already given their evidence in any court of record. And therefore there is no reason that our Lord Jesus should lose his authority among us, because the apostles his witnesses have left the world, and so has the witness of the Spirit and the Holy Ghost: since that which they testified to mankind stands upon authentic record in the holy gospel, which cannot with any show of reason be questioned: for if we do not allow this way of conveying down a testimony to future times, we can know nothing of what was done before us. And by denying all credit to these writings, we shall only teach posterity how little credit is due to any of ours. Nay, we shall shake all men's titles to their estates; and kings will not be able to keep their crowns fast upon their heads. Nothing will be certain; but it may be questioned whether all the records in the tower, and the public acts of former kings and parliaments, be not mere forgeries.

Besides, nobody in those days ever went about to disprove what these *witnesses of Christ* preached and have writ. Neither Jew nor Gentile undertook to show that these things were only devised for his credit. There were too great testimonies from heaven still remaining in the church for several ages to confute such a slander. And therefore all that the devil himself could think of to shake men's belief was to set up some wonder-workers of his own to confront Jesus, and, as it were, to vie miracles with him and his disciples. But all were so soon scattered, like mists before the sun, that they appeared to

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be but thin shadows in comparison with the living Spirit of God that was in the church, which baffled and overcame them all. Insomuch that Origen[v] assures the heathen, and they never went about to confute him, that there were not above thirty of Simon Magus his followers then to be found in the world, though he had made diligent inquiry after them by travel into all parts. They were all vanished, though he made a great noise for a time, whilst the followers of Jesus multiplied and increased, even by their persecutions. Nor could Apollonius afterward gain any proselytes that continued; but his fame soon died, together with himself. Whereas the authority of Jesus bare up itself against all the opposition of the Roman empire, and not only was supported, but advanced, and prevailed more and more: their barbarous cruelties only making it grow the faster. For herein, as Lactantius observes, the faith and constancy of Christians was bravely displayed. Men thought they did not without cause abhor the heathenish superstition, when they saw them rather die than do that which others doing lived and enjoyed the greatest worldly prosperity. It made them inquire what that good was which they defended even unto death; which was dearer than all the pleasures and glory of this world. The people heard them in the midst of torments glory in Christ Jesus. And whilst they inquired who he was, the truth of the gospel was divulged and spread abroad among them. Their sufferings brought many to see their martyrdom; and there they saw that which moved their inquiry; and by their inquiry they were satisfied, and learnt to believe in Jesus as those martyrs did.

But it is time to put an end to this chapter; which I shall conclude with a few remarks upon some places of the holy books, relating to the testimony of the apostles, or those that followed them. The first is in 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, 6, &c. where you read how the apostles *approved themselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth,* &c. In which words, if they be well

[v] [Contr. Cels. lib. i. §. 57. tom. i. p. 372; lib. vii. §. 11. p. 638.]

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considered, you will find every one of these three *witnesses*, which St. John says gave testimony to our Saviour on earth; so that he might be said to *come* in the ministry of the apostles, *by Water, and Blood, and the Spirit.* They expressed the holiness of his life *by their pureness, by their longsuffering, by their kindness, by love unfeigned, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left:* that is, they were every way appointed and armed with integrity against all calumnies; there was none that could touch their reputation, and say that these men had any worldly design. And as they witnessed to him thus in their holy lives, so they did in their holy doctrine, *by knowledge*, and *by the word of truth*, preaching the gospel sincerely, as those that studied not to please men, but God who trieth the hearts. And they were made conformable also to his death, and thereby continued the witness of the *Blood, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in imprisonments*, and all the rest of the hardships here mentioned, which I need not transcribe again. And lastly, he forgets not to remember them of the witness of the *Spirit* which they brought along with them: for he says they approved themselves as ministers of God, *by the Holy Ghost*, and *by the power of God;* that is, beside all the other divine gifts wherewith they appeared, they confirmed their doctrine by many miraculous works, which could not be done but by the power of God. Thus they became not only his *witnesses*, as our Saviour said they should[x], but they witnessed to him after the very same manner that he had taught in his example, by *water*, by *blood*, and by the *Spirit*. And therefore, when he exhorts Timothy to preach the gospel, and to be *strong in the grace of Jesus Christ*, and to commit the charge of preaching also to other faithful persons, he enforces his persuasion by this argument, that the things he was to deliver were only such as *he had heard of him among* or *by many witnesses*[y]. He learnt them, by so many good evidences which St. Paul had given him, that he needed not fear to speak them to any man, much less doubt to commend them to other faithful preachers (upon the same account that he had received them), that they might be able to instruct posterity.

[x] Luke xxiv. 48. [y] 2 Tim. ii. 2.

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Such, one would think from what hath been said, were those *two witnesses* mentioned Rev. xi. 3; men of an apostolical spirit, whom Jesus raised up, after his prime witnesses had left the world, to justify still, by all manner of arguments, that great truth which they had preached and sealed with their blood, and God had sealed by the testimony of the Spirit. The next words, indeed, seem to import that the whole body of Christians whom they instructed joined with them in this testimony: but still these great ministers of Jesus Christ, the guides and leaders of those Christians (whosoever they were, and in what times soever they lived, I meddle not with such difficulties) were his most eminent witnesses: who preached the gospel with such power, that it excited against them the fury of unbelievers, who could not endure that such witnesses should speak for Jesus. For they testified to him these three ways here mentioned (which is all that I allege this place for, not taking upon me to interpose in the controversies there are about the explanation of this vision), by *water*, *blood*, and *the Spirit*. First by *water*, if we understand thereby their holy preaching and living: for it is said that they had *power to prophesy*[z]; which signifies that they were endowed with extraordinary gifts (for prophets were next to apostles in the church) to interpret and expound the holy writings, and prove out of Moses and the prophets (as our Saviour did[a]) all things that concerned him, both his sufferings and his glory. And this they did *clothed in sackcloth*, that is, in the habit of mourners, for the abominations, I suppose, which they saw committed, and the provoking infidelity of those to whom they preached: which was a notable mark of their great piety and charity, as you may learn from Ezek. ix. 4. and Matt. v. 4. They are said also to be *the two olive trees*[b], that is, like Zerubbabel and Joshua (two famous persons among the Jews after the captivity, who were represented by this emblem[c]), *kings and priests unto God;* men endowed with great authority and illumination from above, and with as great purity. For they had so much of the oil of gladness that they imparted it to others; to the *candlesticks*, that is, the churches wherein they shined: for so St. John teaches us, in the beginning of

[z] Rev. xi. 3. [a] Luke xxiv. 27. [b] Rev. xi. 4. [c] Zach. iv. 3.

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this book, to interpret *candlesticks;* which is a great argument of the excellency of these men, who, by the witness of their life and doctrine, made all those who were under their care to testify, some way or other, to the same truth that they did: at least by their lives; for they are said to *stand before the God of the earth;* which is an Hebrew phrase, signifying 'to minister unto God,' to be employed in his worship and service, as the priests and people were at the temple; and therefore sets forth the piety and devotion of these persons, whose business it was to serve God, even then when it was most dangerous so to do.

And as by water, so by *blood* also they bare witness of him. For they had *war made against them,* and in the fight, since they would not yield, they were *killed*[d]. Nay, it was notorious to all, that their persecutors had not only drawn the sword against them, but that they had *resisted unto blood;* for *their dead bodies lay in the street of the great city*[e], and they *would not suffer them to be put in graves*[f]: which shows the enraged malice which they bare to these zealous *witnesses;* who had *tormented them*[g] by the sharpness of their arguments, and by their constant reproofs of their infidelity and wickedness.

Nor was the *witness of the Spirit* wanting: for they approved themselves as *ministers of God,* to speak in St. Paul's language, and *witnesses of Christ,* by wonders and miracles so great, that they might be compared to the two great prophets Moses and Elias, who appeared with our Saviour on the holy mount. For they sent *fire out of their mouths*[h], and had *power to shut up heaven that it should not rain*[i]; both which were the known works of Elias. They had *power likewise over the waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they pleased*[k]; which is the plain description of men like to Moses; who brought such plagues on the Egyptians as these had power to do upon those who were like them, both in hardness of heart and in oppression of the faithful servants of God. And therefore I suppose they are described with a power to hurt and destroy rather than

[d] Rev. xi. 7. [e] Ver. 8. [f] Ver. 9. [g] Ver. 10. [h] Ver. 5. [i] Ver. 6. [k] Ibid.

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with that healing and saving virtue wherewith the first witnesses of Christ principally came, to signify that their rebellious enemies should be punished for their rejecting Jesus, and doing *despite to the Spirit of grace;* which once came to them in a more healthful and salutary manner, casting out devils, turning water into wine, healing all manner of plagues and diseases, and that as often as they themselves pleased to desire. And more than this, you read that after the time appointed by God for it, he restored these prophets to life again[l], and thereby made their testimony something like that of his Son's: that is, men animated with the very same spirit stood up in their place, to the amazement of all their opposers; who were so far from being able to hurt them, that they were as safe as if they had been in heaven. The presence of God was with them, as in the cloud which preserved the Israelites from all danger; and he advanced them to great honour by the heavenly gifts wherewith they were adorned. As Elias is said to come, though he did not appear in person, but another in his spirit and power; and David is said to be *raised up* to reign over the Jews[m], because his Son, that is, Christ, was set upon his throne; so did *the spirit of life from God enter into these witnesses, and they stood upon their feet,* when he raised up other apostolical persons in their stead, who were not less eminent than those who were dead, but full of the same spirit of wisdom, holiness, burning zeal, and might and power also from God. This frighted all their enemies, as well it might, when they saw the Christian cause would not die, do what they could; but if they killed some, others started up in their room to witness unto Jesus, and assert the same truth, by wonders, by their admirable preaching, by their holy life, and by death itself, if nothing else would satisfy them.

For thus all the *martyrs* testified to him. Whose *blood* witnessed not only that they believed his religion, and that they valued the favour of Jesus more than their lives; but that they had very good reason so to do: or else men of such wisdom would not have endured such torments, as they freely exposed themselves unto, with so much cheerfulness, as we find they did. For as St. Hilary tells us[n]: "Some gloried in the chains

[l] Rev. xi. 11. [m] Jer. xxx. 9. [n] [Tom. i. col. 203 C.]

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which they wore in prison; others being beaten till they died did nothing but give thanks; others readily laid down their necks to be cut off: and more ran to those piles which they saw built to burn them; and, with a devout haste, leaped into those fires at which the ministers of their torments trembled; and there were those who were thrown into the sea, not as if they were to be drowned, but went to partake of the refreshment of eternal bliss." So he writes upon those words of the Psalmist, *Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried: we went through fire and water*[l], &c. The fruit of which was, that thereby many were converted unto Christ. Their death gave life to others, who seeing their zeal, their constancy, their meekness, their patience, and their charity, became proselytes to that faith for which they suffered. A new race of illustrious *martyrs* rose up in their stead, in whom they yet lived. For "there was no other cause (as that father adds upon the following verse) why they gave themselves as whole burnt offerings to Christ, but that by the example of their faith and martyrdom they might instruct many more to be martyrs." Nay, their *blood* did not only water many young plants, and made them grow to their perfection; but he tells us a little after, in his exposition of the same Psalm, *Plura scimus*[m], &c.: "We know many who were wholly ignorant of the divine Sacraments (i. e. the Christian religion), that by the example of the martyrs run to martyrdom." No wonder then that these above all others have been called the *witnesses* of Jesus (for that is the interpretation of the word *martyr*), and that Christians were forward even to kiss their wounds, and to embrace their dead bodies, as the remains of those who had done most eminent service to our Lord. Who himself therefore witnessed to them after they were dead, and declared that their *blood* was very dear and precious in their sight, and that it had sealed nothing but the truth. For there can no other reason be given but this, why at the monuments of these *martyrs* or *witnesses* our Saviour was pleased to have so many miracles wrought afterward, and before such a number of people, that Porphyry himself (as we learn both from St. Cyril and St. Hierome), though an avowed enemy of our religion, could not but

[l] Ps. lxvi. 10, 12. [m] [Col. 205 E.]

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acknowledge them. They still spake and bare *witness* to Jesus by these wonderful works when they were dead; or rather Jesus spake for them, as I said, and declared from heaven that these were his *faithful witnesses*, whose word ought to be believed, whereby they had declared him to be the Lord.

A PRAYER.

Who would not believe on thee, O Lord? who would not magnify thy name? For great and marvellous are thy works, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. All nations ought to come and worship before thee, whose majesty and glory is so many ways made manifest. Thou hast raised poor and ignorant men to be mighty ministers of thy grace, and witnesses of thy resurrection, and co-workers with thee for the illumination and conversion of the world. Blessed be thy name, for all the glorious lights which have been in thy church in every age; by whom thy holy faith hath been preserved and propagated to our days. Blessed be thy name, for all the martyrs who sealed it with their blood: and for all the confessors who freely acknowledged thee, with the danger of their lives. Great was thy glory which shone in their most exemplary holiness, fortitude, patience, love unfeigned both to friends and enemies; and in that mighty power whereby they approved themselves as the ministers of God.

Thanks be to thee, O God, the Lord of heaven and earth, for the comfort of thy holy Scriptures, wherein we read the story of our Saviour's wondrous love; and of that most miraculous power which appeared in him, to testify unto him, and at last raised him from the dead, and advanced him to the throne of glory; from whence he sent the Holy Ghost, to endue his apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, with power from on high; that they might be his witnesses, and *commit that which they had received to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also.* O God, I cannot but again adore thy incomprehensible love, which can never be sufficiently praised. Who can understand the exceeding riches of thy grace, that thou, whose naked glory is too bright for our weak minds to fix their eyes upon, wouldst be pleased in most admirable condescending love to manifest thyself and visit us in our flesh? Thou art infinitely above the greatest of us; who are far less worthy to approach thee than the lowest creature in this world is fit for our friendship and society. So much the more marvellous is thy unheard-of love, that thou

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wouldst admit us to such a near relation unto thee. So much the greater is our happiness, that in Christ Jesus thou hast made thyself our portion, and designed us to be eternally blessed with thee. Great was his care and kindness all the days of his flesh towards the most miserable wretches, who received the greatest tokens of his love. I rejoice now to think with what tenderness he received the poor, fed the hungry, visited the sick, cured the diseased; and when he had left the world, communicated the same power unto others, that they might exercise the same charity that he had done. I see both the power and goodness of our Lord in all those works of wonder which he did. I see that his mercy endureth for ever, which hath preserved a faithful record of these things, that we *through patience and comfort of the holy Scriptures might have hope.*

Now the God of all grace inspire me and all other Christian souls with the same faith, love and ardent zeal, which was in those burning and shining lights, the witnesses of Christ. That we may be followers of them, as they were of him: and acknowledging the same Lord, being members of the same body, partaking of the same sacraments, and living upon the same heavenly food, we may lead the same holy lives, in hope to shine one day with them in the same celestial glory. Help us to *continue in the things which we have learnt, and have been assured of, knowing of whom we have learnt them; that we may not at any time let them slip. For how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; thou, O God, also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to thine own will?* May we always carefully lay up and preserve these sacred truths in our heart, which were in so glorious a manner delivered to us! May they work there perpetually with great power, and be reverenced as the holy oracles of God! May they be the spring of all our motions throughout the whole course of our life! That with an even steady pace, whatsoever dangers come in our way, we may walk on towards that happy place, where those holy ones rejoice for ever with our Lord. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be given by us, and by those glorified spirits, and by all the angels in heaven, everlasting praises. Amen.

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CHAP. IX.

The use we are to make of their testimony.

It is time now to bring this discourse to an issue; and, having examined all these divine witnesses, taken their proofs and depositions, and found their testimony, upon due inquiry, to be good and legal, to consider with ourselves what we have to do, and what judgment we will pass now that we have heard their evidence. God, the *Father* of all, says, that Jesus is his Son: the *Word* himself appeared oft to justify this truth; the *Holy Ghost* came down from heaven to attest it; the *prophet of the Highest* proclaimed it; the *holy life* of our Saviour spake as much; and his *bloody death* sealed it; to which the *Spirit* set its seal also, and undeniably witnessed that blood was sacred which he shed, for a testimony, upon the cross. All these have done their part, all that witnesses, by their office, are to do, for the making of this good, that Jesus is the Son of God. That which remains is our task; who are bound to consider, and seriously ponder, and impartially judge, and then faithfully improve their sacred testimony, that Jesus may have the glory that is due unto him, and we may have that benefit which God, by him, designs to bestow upon us.

I.

And first of all let us consider a while the great weight and importance of this truth, that *Jesus is God's Son*. If the whole frame of Christian religion did not rely upon it, there would not have been such care taken to settle it, and lay it deep in our hearts by so much labour and strength of argument. It is equally blamable to be laborious about a trifle, and to be superficial and slight in things of greatest moment. No man of sense will, with a great deal of diligence, summon together a number of witnesses to make good that which, when it is proved, it is indifferent (as to any thing that depends upon it) whether it be true or false. No question there is a considerable interest of ours, which is concerned in this truth, else the holy men of God would not have called *heaven and earth to witness* and bear their testimony to it.. The *Father*, the

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Word, the *Holy Ghost*, would not have concurred with the *Water*, the *Blood*, and the *Spirit* to assert and maintain it, but that all is little enough to justify it, and that it is a thing of which we cannot but desire the greatest assurance. It is (1) the *foundation* of all other truths in the Christian religion, as you may read, 1 Cor. iii. 11, Matt. xvi. 17, 18. It is the *rock* on which the church is built; the ground that supports the whole fabric: which, if it be infirm and rotten, all falls to rubbish and confusion. And therefore (2) the devil laboured to undermine this truth above all others. Like a subtle enemy, when the apostles, as *wise master-builders*, had laid this foundation, he employed false teachers and counterfeit apostles, as so many pioneers, to work under this, and lay their trains to blow it up: which he knew was a nearer way to ruin all than to plant his batteries against the building only. The history of the first times affords too plentiful instances of this: for we find there arose *many Antichrists*[n], and *many false prophets* went out into the world[o]: and the very *spirit of Antichrist*, as he tells us[p], was this, to deny that *Jesus, who came in flesh*, (in a mortal condition, and subject to our miseries,) *was Christ*. They would not have it thought that any one who suffered so vilely was the great *King* that had been so long expected. Or, if they believed Jesus to be a great Prophet, and that he was raised from the dead, and rewarded for his labours in heaven, as other prophets were, yet they denied that he was made *Lord of all*, the Head of the church and of all principalities and powers; who was to be honoured by all men, even as they honour the Father. And therefore (3) the apostles employed as great care and earnest endeavour for to strengthen and support this weighty truth, as the enemies of religion laboured might and main, as we say, to weaken and overthrow the belief of it. This was the thing they every where preached, as you read in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. And for this very end St. John wrote this Epistle, to confirm his disciples in this faith against all the subtle opposition of their adversaries; as you may collect from many passages beside that which I have expounded. And it was the thing aimed at also in his second Epistle, where he rejoices

[n] 1 John ii. 18. [o] iv. 1. [p] Ver. 3.

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to hear that they *walked in the truth*[q], and cautions them against *those deceivers and Antichrists*[r]. And indeed (4) it was the great note of difference between the true prophets and the false, as you may see 1 Cor. xii. 3, and in the place now mentioned in this Epistle[s], which also (5) makes him command his disciples, that if any one pretending to the Spirit did not acknowledge this, they should not use the common civility to him of bidding him *God speed*[t]. And if any man apostatized from this faith (which is the last thing I shall mention), St. Paul pronounces a most dreadful curse upon him, and wishes or predicts the Lord would come and speedily execute it[u]: *for whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God*[x].

This being a truth therefore of so great moment, as appears by these considerations, and by the many *witnesses* to which St. John here appeals for the proof of it, let us be sure to settle a sense of its concernment to us in our hearts; and then to think often of it, and study it so thoroughly, that we may perceive both the truth and importance of it: or else we shall prove ourselves despisers of God, who do as bad as say, that it was a needless pains which he bestowed in giving so many evidences of that for which we have no regard, or no list to bring to trial or examination. And that, truly, I doubt, is the temper of most Christian people at this day: they think all discourses on this subject useless or little worth, because they prove that which they believe already. Heathens might reap some profit by them, but what, say they, have we to do with them? But while such thoughts as these have too long possessed the drowsy Christian world, they remain, alas! in the very dregs of heathenism, with a little smack or taste of Christianity. It is a sad thing to consider, but so it is, that they who cannot endure to think upon what ground their belief stands, (because they would not put themselves to the trouble of understanding it,) are of that base temper which is the mother of idolatry, of Mahometism, and of all spurious religions in the world. For what is it makes men worship the sun, moon, and stars, or address their services to dead men, nay, to a piece of wood, or a red cloth, or some such paltry thing? what makes Mahomet

[q] 2 John 3. [r] Ver. 7. [s] 1 John iv. 1, 2. [t] 2 John 10.
[u] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. [x] 2 John 9.

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so reverenced by a great part of the world as the prophet of the Highest, but that they have ever been so taught, and it is the custom to honour him? They examine no further, nor inquire for any other reason; that is, do not observe that there is no other reason for their belief. Upon the very same account do many receive Jesus for the Son of God; he hath no better footing in their souls, nor stands upon firmer grounds than Mahomet, or the sun, or an idol does, in the opinion of other men. There is no other reason, as far as they know, but only the common practice of the place where they live, why they honour him as the great Lord who governs all. Is not this a foul dishonour to our Saviour, to have no better subjects nor a stronger hold than this of their hearts? How little is he beholden to those who can justify his title upon no better principles than others make use of in the behalf of the usurpers of divinity! But it reflects the greatest shame in our own faces that we should have such plentiful and good evidence in our books, and none at all in our minds. What is that respect worth which we pretend to religion if a false would have been accepted with as much affection as we have for the true, had it not come too late?

The people would have Christ's ministers to move their affections; to carry them away with a torrent of words and earnest expressions. But to what shall they carry them? stay a while and answer that question. If it be not to that which is true, they will do you wrong to hurry them so violently and in such haste to that from which you ought rather to run away. Now how shall you know whether it be to the truth or no? Must it not be proved by good reasons? Must they not make it evident and clear that they propound something which ought to be entertained before they can safely move any man's heart to embrace it? But to what purpose is all this done, if, after all their labour, you will not consider it? if all this must be passed by as dry stuff, and you will gape only for the application? Consider, I beseech you, that if the affections you desire should be stirred be not grounded on good judgment, (which must be settled on some weighty reason,) they are so far from being so good as they ought, that they may soon prove very hurtful and bad. They dispose a man to be an empty enthusiast; to be rapt away with any passionate,

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though idle, story; and to be set on fire by zealous expressions for any plausible, though dangerous, error. In short, such affections are indifferent to be either good or bad, as it chances. Therefore, if you would have our Lord *commend you* for being of his religion rather than of any other, if you would have the praise of it, study well such things as these, which from the holy writings I have propounded to be considered in the foregoing treatise: for you see the very bottom of his religion stands upon them. So shall you be satisfied also that your affections are truly good when you are moved with love towards him, because you *are sure and know* (as St. Peter speaks[x]) *that he is that Christ, the Son of the living God.* Do you not think that many have a very tender melting affection for the blessed Virgin Mary? and that they are full of devotion to several other saints, and feel a great passion sometimes in their prayers to them, or in their commendation of them? Have a care, lest your affections to the Lord Jesus be no better than these. How can you think that they are of an higher strain, more than mere natural and imaginative things, if you have no better reasons to prove that he is to be worshipped than they have to build their respect upon to those? If you receive him for the King of heaven, upon the same account that she is set up for the queen, (because it is the common opinion which you have sucked in with your mother's milk, &c.) your love to him is just like their love to her: nothing divine or heavenly, but a natural passion, which is as ready to spend itself upon any other person as on himself.

And here it will be fit to add, that we ought to be very cautious what we believe, because there are so many cheats in the world; and of those, above all others, we ought to be well aware, who would have us use no caution, but greedily swallow, without any chewing, that which they deliver to us upon their word. God, you see, would not have us believe without good reasons, and reasons proportionable to the weight of the thing which we are to believe. His ministers appeal to the testimony of known witnesses; and where witnesses offer themselves to us to prove any thing, it is our duty sure to hear and examine them. And we ought not to surrender our belief to any thing

[x] John vi. 69.

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carelessly; nor, either out of idleness and sloth, or being overawed by the confidence which any men assume to themselves, content ourselves with an implicit faith; neglecting to search, and prove, and try all things, which demand to have no less than our souls resigned up unto them. For that which commands our understanding, and hath got authority there, hath a right to govern our will and command the whole man: and therefore we had need take care what we suffer to seat itself in that throne; for according as our opinions and judgments are, so will our inclinations be, both in our affections and in our lives. It is a great commendation which Socrates gives Cebes[y], that he was careful to inquire into all things, and duly weigh them, καὶ οὐ πάνυ εὐθέως ἐθέλει πείθεσθαι ὅ, τι ἄν τις εἴποι, 'and would not presently believe that which anybody said,' though otherwise he had sufficient respect unto him. That wariness which was in an heathen sure doth as much or more concern us Christians; who ought to suspect those who would have us believe them without putting ourselves to the trouble of much search. It is a sign they mean to deceive; for if God himself doth not expect to be believed unless there be good witnesses for that to which his ambassadors demand assent, why should men be so presumptuous as to ask us to believe them blindly? or why should we be such obedient fools as to do more for them than God would have us do for himself? He hath given us eyes, and therefore we ought to look about us, especially when men bid us wink, and take any thing upon trust. He hath endued us with reason, and therefore we ought to sift and try and examine that which is propounded to us. And if anybody say, Do not try nor examine; you are not able to discern the differences of things; believe as we teach, for we cannot deceive you: mark that man or company of men as the greatest deceivers; who intend to impose something upon you which will not abide the test, and for which they have no good proof, if their pretences be examined. You may be sure, if they were well furnished with proofs they would not fear the trial, but desire to have all brought to the touchstone, that truth may be differenced from its counterfeit. Nobody refuses to be judged but he that knows his cause is naught,

[y] [Plat. Phæd. p. 63 A.]

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and fears he shall be cast. Such men had need do all they can to lurk in the dark, and put off their stuff when nobody can see what it is; who know it is deceitfully wrought, and will not abide the light. They do wisely, and as cunning merchants, who make up in words, and great assurances of their honesty, what is wanting in the goodness of their wares. But why we should have so little wit as to take their words, who can tell? We must answer for this folly, no doubt, to Almighty God; who hath given us more understanding, if we would use it, and taught us by himself to call for good witnesses of that which is offered to us for a truth. And the more strictly we examine these which St. John here alleges, the better we shall be satisfied that they intend not to deceive us; which is a mark we should always have much in our eye when we are inquiring after truth. If, the more we search, consider, and ponder the proofs which are brought, the better they appear, and the clearer they grow, it is a very good sign there is nothing wanting to make it fully entertained but only longer thoughts, and greater and more serious consideration: as, on the other hand, we have great reason to suspect and turn away from that which, the longer we weigh its proofs the lighter they seem; and the propounders of them also begin to shift and shuffle, till they have put all into a mist, in which we can see nothing but that they are at a loss, and are fain to puzzle us because they cannot clear that which they were about. Thanks be to God, there is nothing of this in the evidences we give for the true Christian religion: they are plain and perspicuous, and show themselves in a greater brightness the more we look upon them and the better we are acquainted with them. Search and try what has been said, and the light of the glorious gospel of Christ will shine with greater lustre in your eyes, and you will confess with St. Peter, that *he hath called us to the knowledge of him by glory and virtue*[z]; that is, by a most amazing power of God, which declared him to be his only Son, our Lord.

II.

Let us therefore, in the next place, consider seriously how excellent and perfectly rational the faith of Christians is. There

[z] 2 Pet. i. 3.

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is nothing founded upon such authority as our most holy religion. It is no childish, silly thing to be a believer. A man doth not betray his weakness and easy credulity when, upon examination and search, he suffers his soul to be planted with these new principles, but demonstrates the strength, the nobleness, and ingenuity of his mind, which can discern and judge aright; for nothing can pretend to so much reason as they. There are a vast heap of things which I could here accumulate, beside those which I have treated of, to make good this assertion: but because the method of the apostle, which I have followed, is so clear and easy, and the witnesses so full and pregnant, that every one of them affords us many evidences, I will content myself with a brief review of what hath been said. Which will be sufficient to convince us that our faith is the highest improvement of our reason; and doth not debase, but elevate and raise our understanding upon the surest grounds of divine demonstration. For if you consider what testimonials they brought along with them who have pretended to speak in God's name, you will find there is nothing comparable to the witness which God hath given of his Son: no, not in that religion which was really founded by his authority; much less in that where there was only the *name* of God pretended, without any *power*.

I. Mahomet, I mean (to begin first with the latter of these), took upon him to be the apostle and the prophet of God, greater not only than Moses, but than Jesus himself. And such was his confident brags of revelations from God, that among a company of wild Arabians, whom Algazel acknowledges to have approached the nearest to beasts of all other men, he made some proselytes to his belief. But what proof did he give that he was divinely sent? Was it ever heard that God spake to him so much as once, as he did often to our Saviour? At what time, or in what place, and in whose audience, did God say to him, "Thou art my prophet?" When did a voice from heaven come to any three, or but one man, and say, "This is the apostle of God, hear him?" It is a marvellous providence of God, that this impostor, who wanted no confidence, should never adventure, in all the relations he hath made of himself (quite contrary to our Lord, who wrote nothing of his own life, but left all to his disciples), to tell any such story as this, for his

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greater credit and glory among his followers. We read indeed of some idle tales which he reports of an angel speaking to him, and of his ascension into heaven, I know not how many millions of miles; but what witness was there of these things? what was his name who saw the angel appear to him? or who stood by when he was transported and carried out of sight, as he dreamed? or when and to whom did Moses or any one else appear and verify it, that he had been with them in glory? If we must take his own word, which is all we can hear of to vouch it, then we must not refuse to believe every foolish fellow who has impudence enough to pretend to prophesy. But what then will become of the faith of Mahomet himself, if the sword were out of his hand? Let us hear such a man as John the Baptist (whose piety and virtue is attested by those who were no friends of our religion) affirm that he heard and saw such things as he reports, and we will be content to abate them the apostles, and such a multitude of people as heard God say he would *glorify his name* in our Saviour. And in what glory hath that false prophet appeared since he left the world? whose eyes hath he struck out with the brightness of his countenance? nay, by whom hath he been so much as seen since he was buried? I need not put the question about his resurrection, for they never pretended it: only the sottish people would not believe when he died that he was really dead, but said he was taken up to heaven, as Jesus was. And Omar, one of his successors, threatened death to them that should say he was dead; for he was only gone away, as Moses did into the mount, and would return again. From whence perhaps arose that vulgar error among us, that the Mahumedans expect the return of their prophet[a]. But Abu Bechri proved to them out of the Alcoran that he was to die as other prophets before him, and so appeased Omar and the multitude.

And was it ever heard that the Holy Ghost fell down upon him, in a visible shape, while he lived? There is not one of his own followers (as the learned Mr. Pocock assures us) who makes any mention so much as of the pigeon, which, as we commonly tell the tale, was wont to fly to his ear, as if it whispered some revelation to him. There was not that small

[a] See Pocock, in Gregor. Abul Phar. p. 180, 264. [4to. Oxon. 1650.]

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imitation of what is recorded of our Saviour. Much less was there any such glorious body seen descending on him, as that which came down like a dove, and crowned our Saviour's head. The heavens never opened to him; nor was he transfigured in the presence of any of his disciples. Where are the books that can tell us of any such thing? or so much as of any miracles which he wrought to confirm his doctrine? He himself says, in his Alcoran, more than once, that "he was not sent with miracles, but with arms." And though his followers afterward pretended that he did work miracles, yet they never pretend they were done frequently, and most of them are very ridiculous and useless; and their learned men do not at all rely upon them, nor think he proved his prophecy by this means. There is no news of any blind man's eyes that he opened, or of his making the lame to walk, or cleansing a poor leper; much less of a dead man's hearing his voice, and arising out of his grave, and of such like things done by his followers: which we are sure, from eyewitnesses, our Lord did, and gave those that testify it power to do the same wonders. And if we go to inquire of the witness of Water, in holiness of doctrine and life, what a sink of dirty stuff is his Alcoran! The pleasures of the flesh are the highest that he had in his thoughts to propound to his followers. His heaven is no better than a sensual paradise. But as for the joys of the Holy Ghost, or a taste of any spiritual delights, he seems to have had no more sense of them than a swine. How should he, being an impure lascivious beast himself, who had seventeen wives, besides concubines? and not content with these, took another man's wife, (the wife of his servant Zaid,) and pretended a revelation of it: which, he had the impudence to say, told him that God was not only well pleased he should have her, but took it ill he had abstained so long from her, out of fear what the world would say; whereas he ought to have feared God rather than men. What could be expected from such a brute, but such a book as he has left; a mere heap, or dunghill rather, of filthy nonsense? And if we inquire further for the witness of Blood, we can find none but the blood of other men, which bears witness that he was a false prophet. For his business was to shed the blood of his opposers, rather than to give his own, as a testimony to the truth. The sword was his principal weapon, to subdue men to

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his belief. He did not persuade them by arguments, but compelled them to yield by force of arms. "Go," says he, in the 19th section of the Alcoran, "and kill all those who will not be converted." He was a murderer as well as a liar, (like the first deceiver of all,) so that, to save their bodies rather than their souls, his neighbours found it the best way to submit themselves to his yoke. Did our blessed Saviour use any such violence? Did he come with a sword in his hand and say, Yield your understandings or your throats? No, *he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* He would not let his apostles call for fire from heaven to consume anybody, though it had been as easy for him to do, as to send the Holy Ghost in fiery tongues upon them. He never did any miracle to the hurt of the smallest living creature; though it would have been recompensed by a multitude of noble cures that he wrought for their owners. It did not please him that one of his servants cut off but the ear of Malchus, though it was in his defence. He was the good Shepherd, who would not kill the sheep, but laid down his life for them. This we commemorate perpetually, to his eternal praise: whereas the false prophet hath left no other memory, but that he was more like a wolf than a shepherd; for he came for nothing but to worry and destroy.

But he doth not deserve so much regard as to be thus seriously confuted; were not all this said rather to make us sensible of the excellence of our own religion, than to disprove that which was taught by him: whose greatest wisdom was, that he chose to begin to make his proselytes, and plant his religion, among a company of rude people; who were more like beasts, I told you, than men. If they had been men of any understanding, one cannot imagine how they should have given credit to such ill contrived tales as those which he invented. But we are told by his own followers, that the people of Mecca (a place famous for his tomb at this day) could neither write nor read, but were perfectly ignorant. Nay, Mahomet himself was wont to say, that "he was sent by God to an illiterate nation," which they expound of the Arabians about Mecca, who were not people of the Book, as they call the Jews and Christians, but as ignorant as they came out of their mother's womb, (says one of their own authors,) having never learnt the art of writing, or of casting account. Which shows how vastly

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different the beginnings of that religion were from those of ours; which was preached to the wisest and politest people upon earth, as that was to the most rude and stupid. The Greeks and Romans soon saw their countries filled with this new doctrine. Nor was it in the power of their philosophers or orators to stop its progress. But there were no such creatures among those wild Arabians, and those philosophers who arose afterwards of this sect were ashamed, it may be made appear by good proofs, of the Alcoran. So destitute they are of any thing whereby to support the religion of that book, that they are fain to fly to the gospel of Christ, from thence to gain some authority to it. There, says the Saracen, in Theodorus Abucara[b], Christ wrote these words, 'Αποστέλλω ὑμῖν προφήτην Μαωμὲθ λεγόμενον, 'I send you a prophet called Mahomet;' but Christians have blotted it out of their books. For he they fancy is the Paraclete whom our Saviour promises; and it is one of the names they bestow upon this impostor in their writings: who pretends our Saviour foretold his coming, as many have observed out of the sixty-first chapter of the Alcoran[c]. Which shows how hard they are put to their shifts, when they fly to us for refuge; and when ignorance is the greatest security and support to their religion at this day. It is very remarkable, that as our religion was propagated among the wisest and most learned nations, by the most illiterate men, merely by the power of the Spirit and the Holy Ghost, so being thus propagated, all the learned part of the world is of our religion. They that are of any other are ignorant of good learning, as their great enemy. But this fears not to be tried, because it is sure that knowledge is its friend, and that wisdom, as our Saviour said, will be justified of her children: who clearly see even from their own writings, that Mahomet, at the best, was but an hot enthusiast, who took his own warm thoughts for inspiration. But he had no assurance of what he said: as the humour wrought he was for new illuminations. It was not his fault that his disciples had not another book, which should have put down the Alcoran. For as our famous professor of this learning[d] has observed out of Alsharestanius,

[b] [Opusc. 19. tom. i. p. 411 C. Biblioth. Patr. Græco-Lat. fol. Par. 1624.]

[c] Hacksp. Dialog. de Passione Domin. [s. p. 4to. Altd. 1642.]

[d] Mr. Pocock, Ib. p. 178.

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when he lay sick of the fever of which he died, he called for pen and ink, that he might write them an infallible book, (it seems as yet he had not done it,) to keep them from erring when he was dead. This Omar looked upon as a phrensy, (though Mahomet took it for an inspiration,) and said, "Alas! the sickness of the apostle of God is very strong. It is sufficient that we have the book of God, i. e. the Alcoran, there needs no more." But some were of another mind: and while the company that stood by contended and strove among themselves, some calling for the pen and ink, and others agreeing with Omar, that he was beside himself, Mahomet cried out, "Get ye gone, it doth not become you to dispute before me:" and so there was an end. But some bewail this as a great misfortune, that he did not write them such a book as he then had in his head: that is, more phrensies and ravings of his brain-sick imagination. . . . . But it is time to have done with this: which I have said not merely to show how senseless that religion is, which hath overspread so great a part of the world, but how happy we are who are taught by our Lord and Master Christ Jesus: whose faith relies upon such certain, evident and divine grounds, that if we did but live according to it, we need not fear but by its power and force it would overcome and vanquish the other, though supported by never so numerous followers. The Lord of his infinite mercy quicken our faith, that we may outlive them; for it is plain we can so far out-reason them, that there is no more comparison between our grounds and theirs, than there is between the wisest man that ever was, and those blocks of Mecca that could neither write nor read.

II. The only religion that can come into any competition with ours is that of Moses, who indeed was sent of God, and as became a faithful servant of his in the house or family committed to his charge followed his orders, and honestly testified and reported those things which God commanded him to speak[b]. But if you seriously weigh what hath been said, you will find the Jews had not such weighty arguments to persuade them to believe on Moses as we have to believe in Jesus, who hath abrogated a great part of that religion.

[b] Heb. iii. 5.

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1. And first for the witness of the Father, the Jews say, *We know that God spake to Moses*[c]. But how did they know it? What evidence were they able to give themselves of it? If it had pleased them to lay aside their passion, and look beyond the prejudices of their education, the proof of it would have appeared so slender in comparison with the assurances they might have had of his speaking to Jesus, that they would never have added those scornful words which there follow, *as for this fellow we know not whence he is.* God appeared indeed to Moses in the bush, and said to him, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*[d]*:* and bids him say to the children of Israel, to whom he ordered him to go, *I AM hath sent me to you*[e]. But which of the Israelites stood by when God spake these words to him? What person was there like John Baptist, to be a witness of this voice, which was his commission? What creature was there with him (but the flock he was feeding) that could come afterward and say, I was present and heard God call to him out of the bush? Doth the voice say any where, *I AM hath sent him*, as if it spake to others besides himself? or what words did he himself hear, comparable to those which God spake to our Saviour, saying, *Thou art my Son*, my well-beloved Son? Nor was the manner alike wherein these two voices were delivered: one out of the bush, the other from heaven. And the glory wherewith this came to Moses was much inferior to the glorious appearance of the Holy Ghost descending upon Jesus. An *angel of the Lord* you read *appeared then to Moses in a flame of fire*[f]. But the flame was *in the midst of the bush*, not upon Moses. Whereas the Holy Ghost, not an angel of the Lord, came down at our Saviour's baptism, when he was sent; and not into some distant place, but *lighted upon him*, and there remained. God therefore is said *to dwell in the bush*[g], but never to dwell in Moses; and the dwelling of God there was only by the presence and ministry of an angel: whereas now Jesus himself is the dwelling-place of God, as I have proved, and it is God himself that dwells in him. The divine Majesty came upon him, and there it settled its abode in his person: who is *God manifested in the flesh;* and whose glory we behold, the

[c] John ix. 29. [d] Exod. iii. 6. [e] Ver. 14. [f] Ver. 2. [g] Deut. xxxiii. 16.

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glory as of the only begotten of the Father, which cannot be said of any other man.

All this is so plain, that Moses himself saw this appearance of God to him (though sufficient to persuade him that he was *sent of God*, because he heard him speak to him out of the bush) would not prove a demonstration to others, who did not hear or see any thing to make them believe him, nor had any credible witnesses to justify this beside himself. He says as much afterward to him that sent him, *Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee*[h]. And how could he confute them when they made this exception; unless he had some sensible demonstration to give them that God was with him; which God immediately furnishes him withal[i], though nothing like to the power of our Saviour, as you shall hear presently. All the miracles he wrought were as short of our Lord's as his first commission was, which you see plainly was nothing so noble, nothing so clear as that of our blessed Saviour's. Moses himself is sensible of it, and confesses he wanted some witness that God spake to him, and that he knew not what to say when the Israelites bade him prove it. But our Lord needed not to call for any witness; John the Baptist, a great prophet, as they themselves allowed, was ready of himself (for it was his office) to declare openly that *he saw the Spirit descending from heaven, like a dove, and abiding on him. He saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God;* as the voice from heaven, in his audience also, pronounced him. Which a great many people, if need were, could afterward certify; who concluded *that an angel spake to him*, as you have heard from St. John's testimony[j].

2. Now if you proceed further, and ask for some witness of Moses his authority, like to that of the Word, (the second witness to our Saviour,) who can hear any thing of it? Do we ever read a word of Moses his appearing in such a glory, as our Lord Jesus did to his first martyr St. Stephen, and to St. Paul, and to his beloved disciple? Nay, where are the witnesses that say he was so much as transfigured when he

[h] Exod. iv. 1. [i] Ver. 2. [j] John xii. 29.

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was upon the mount; or doth he himself ever affirm it? When was his raiment made as white as snow? or where (as I shall examine more hereafter) was the *bright cloud* covering the mount, which was all clothed with darkness? We read indeed, that when he came down *his face shone*, but in not so bright and glorious manner as our Saviour's did when he went up into the holy mount, and especially after he ascended into heaven. Then St. Stephen, as I have said, *saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand;* an honour never given to any angel in heaven. And the apostle of the Gentiles saw him again, in a light *greater than that of the sun at noon-day.* And to St. John he appeared as the *KING OF KINGS, AND THE LORD OF LORDS,* in such a majesty as he was not able to bear, but made him *fall at his feet as dead.* He that weighs such things as these will see, that all the glory of Moses (to use St. Paul's words) *was no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth* [k].

3. Then if you look for the testimony of the Holy Ghost, I have already noted that it never came down upon him as it did upon the founder of our religion. Much less did he send it upon some select men after he was dead, who should do as great wonders as himself. And still much less did he bestow it upon all the people, as our Lord did for a while upon all believers. There is not the smallest footstep of any such honour or power that he had. For he did not communicate a portion of his Spirit to the seventy elders who were chosen to be his assistants, but *the Lord said to him, I will come down, and take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and put it upon them* [l], which words do not signify, it is true, that he had less, but only that they had more of the Spirit than before; yet he did not so much as lay his hands upon them that they might receive it, but *God took of the Spirit which was on him, and gave it to the seventy elders,* even to those two who were not there present at the tabernacle, but remained still in the camp [m].

4. If you go therefore next to the testimony of Water, how transparent is the purity of our Saviour's doctrine above that

[k] 2 Cor. iii. 10. [l] Num. xi. 17. [m] Ver. 25, 26.

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of Moses. Whose laws, though they contained nothing dishonest, yet burdened the people, to prevent a greater mischief of their running into idolatry, with a number of precepts which in themselves had no goodness at all to commend them. Nay, the letter of the very moral law laid restraints only upon the outward man, so that they who were subject to it little regarded the purifying of their spirits from those irregular passions and naughty affections which our Lord expressly prohibits. There were many things also indulged in those days which our Lord doth not allow: whose design was, not only to purge the heart and make the spirit of men much better by all his precepts, but to advance them to the noblest degree of purity and goodness. Where do you read in the Books of Moses such precepts of meekness, of mortifying fleshly lusts, of kindness to all, and tender compassion, of trust in God, of contentedness with the present, and hope of his mercy in another world, as are frequent and obvious in the Gospel of Christ? Nay, in what place of the Law do you find so much as one command or exhortation to pray, much less to *pray without ceasing*, and to pray (not for riches, and victory over enemies and long life, but) for the divine grace and favour, for the Holy Spirit, for remission of sins, and for eternal life? And now I mention that word, I cannot but desire you to consider how low and poor the promises of Moses were compared with those of our Saviour, who *hath brought in a better hope.* Of which they could see so little (so dim was the light) in the law of Moses, that a whole sect of men who believed in him and received his law cast away all hope of obtaining good things in another life, and denied the resurrection of the dead. And we must add to all this, that Moses was but the light of that one nation, whereas our Lord says more than once, *I am the light of the world*[n]. Moses washed the bodies of the Jews, but now the hearts of the unclean Gentiles *are purified by faith*[o]. And if you inquire further into the purity of Moses his life, you will find it was not without flaws and blemishes; for *he spake unadvisedly with his lips*[p], and could not bring the people to their rest. But our Lord was perfectly free from all spot, the Lamb of God without blemish;

[n] John viii. 12. ix. 5. [o] Acts xv. 9. [p] [Ps. cvi. 33.]

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who never spake the least word amiss, no, not in the midst of such torments as Moses never endured.

5. For if you pass on to consider what sufferings and *blood* testify; alas! what is the blood of bulls and of goats, to the precious blood of Jesus? Did Moses seal that covenant of which he was the minister, or did he sprinkle the book of the covenant with his own blood? Did he *purge* away *the sins* of the people *by himself*, as our Saviour, we read, did [p]? or sanctify them *by the offering of his own body* once for all, as it is Heb. i. 3? Did he die to bear witness to the truth? or witness such a good confession before Pharaoh, as Jesus before Pontius Pilate? Was it ever heard, that by the enduring of a shameful and cruel death he declared to all the certainty of his prophecy? Upon what altar was he offered? and for what cause did he become a sacrifice? This was peculiar to Jesus, to suffer such things as no man ever did; and for this very cause, because he said he was the Son of God.

6. Moses then had need to do some miracles to confirm his prophecy, since he fell short in many other things of giving satisfaction. Such as we have, I mean, who abound in witnesses to our belief; and hear even this witness, on which the Jews heretofore relied, speak more plainly and powerfully to us than it did to them. The *Spirit* of the Lord was upon Moses, the people saw by the wonders he did, which moved them to follow him. Though now they are so foolishly mad against our Saviour, that, to rob us of this argument, the Jews say Moses his miracles did not prove him to be sent of God, yet it is manifest by their story they were in a manner his only glory; I am sure the principal, or that which first induced their forefathers to give any credit to him. For when he asked of God a sign to give the people (who otherwise he foresaw would question the apparition of the angel to him) that they might believe as much as himself, and acknowledge that God sent him[r]; he granted him a power of doing such wonders as flesh and blood could not do, which, it seems, he thought the properest means to convince them. *What is that in thy hand, saith the Lord* (immediately after the words mentioned before), *and he said, A rod. And the Lord said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a*

[q] Heb. x. 10. [r] Exod. iv. 1.

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serpent, and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto him again, Put forth thine hand and take it by the tail; and he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand; that they may believe the Lord God of their fathers hath appeared unto thee[s]. This was the end for which this miracle was to be wrought. To which he adds another, that if they would *not believe him, nor hearken to the voice of the first*, they might be convinced by the second; or if they would believe neither, he gave him power to do a third, and bade him turn the water of the river into blood[t]. And accordingly you read, he went *and did the signs in the sight of the people, and the people believed; and when they heard God had visited them, bowed their heads and worshipped*[u]. After this indeed they disbelieved again, till God drowned their enemies in the Red sea, and *then the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses*[x]. But were any of these works so wonderful, and so powerful to move belief, as those which our Saviour did? It may deserve a discourse (on a fitting occasion) on purpose to show how much Moses came behind him in this, as well as in all the rest. Both the number and greatness of our Saviour's works were as far beyond his as the strength of a giant is beyond that of an infant. He was cut off in the midst of his days, and yet in that three years and an half wherein he lived, after the *Spirit* of God came upon him at his baptism, he did more wonders than Moses did in forty years; nay, more than had been done from the beginning of the world to that time. And if you regard the quality of them, Moses his taking the serpent by the tail, and turning it into a rod again, was not comparable to our Saviour's casting out devils, treading upon the old serpent, breaking in pieces all his power, by healing all manner of sickness and disease; and giving his disciples also the same authority and power which was visible in himself. Nor was Moses his hand becoming leprous when he put it into his bosom, and its being restored again by the same means, any thing like to the miracles of Jesus in curing so many old lepers of all sorts, both Jews and Samaritans, wheresoever they came to him to implore his charity. Moses brought a strong east wind, which caused

[s] Exod. iv. 2—5. [t] Ver. 7, 8. [u] Ver. 30, 31. [x] xiv. 31.

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the sea to go back, and leave the bottom dry for the Israelites to march through: but this was nothing so wonderful as our Lord's walking upon the sea, as it had been dry land, and commanding Peter to accompany him in the midst of a boisterous wind; and his laying his commands upon such tempests and raging waves, and the fishes also, which all obeyed him. Nay, that great miracle of feeding them with *manna* was not so strange as our Lord's satisfying great multitudes with five or seven loaves and two small fishes: which were not proportionable to so many thousand stomachs as were filled by them; as the quantity of *manna* was to the armies of the Israelites. Besides that you never read a word of Moses his opening the eyes of the blind, much less of his raising the dead, which our Lord did sundry times. I need say no more to show how inferior he was to Jesus even in regard of his miracles; concerning which the multitude said truly, *It never was so seen in Israel*[y]. And yet this was the only thing that convinced that nation at the first, and made them believe in Moses (as I have proved) before they heard God speak to them by an angel, from mount Sinai, at the giving of the Law. That was the most amazing thing of all; but was after they came out of Egypt, and a great while after they had believed Moses was sent of God, as they saw then more fully; and was nothing comparable neither to Jesus's speaking himself to some of the apostles out of heaven, and sending the Holy Ghost from thence, with the gift of tongues and divers others, upon them all. And after all that hath been said of the miracles which the *Spirit* wrought by him, where are the miracles that it wrought for him? Did Moses prove himself a true prophet by rising again after he was dead and buried? To whom did he appear? With whom did he eat and drink? Or who can say that he ascended up into heaven? To whom did he appear in glory, except it was to our Saviour (and some of his disciples) in honour of whom it seems he had then the favour, and not before, to shine in that lustre wherein they beheld him. In short, God gave not *the Spirit by measure* unto Jesus, as you have heard before: he had not such a limited portion of it as Moses had, who appears by these things to have been only a *servant* over the

[y] Matt. ix. 33.

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house of God, in which our Saviour had a power as a *Son*, and that over his *own house*[z].

Thus much hath been said to show the great honour God hath done us in making us Christians: whose faith, you see, stands upon such well-laid grounds, that even they who were taught by God had none comparable to them. Herein we have a felicity above all other men that have ever been, if we be but sensible of it; that we are not required to receive any thing from God, but upon such reasons as far excel those which demanded belief of men in former times, but had not such strength to enforce it. Blessed be God, should we all say.

A PRAYER.

Blessed be God, who hath not done so for any people. He hath shown us Himself, his Word, and the Holy Ghost. Israel hath not seen his glory so as it shines in our eyes. And as for his power and might, they have not known them, no more than the promises and the laws whereby he now governs us. He hath given us a *better covenant*, founded upon a *better blood*, which hath brought in also a *better hope*, and is confirmed by a more *powerful Spirit*. Blessed be his goodness, that our eyes read and our ears hear those things which many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear, but could not see nor hear them. For *it was revealed, that not unto themselves; but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by them that have preached the gospel unto us with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into*[a].

O bless the Lord with us, ye angels of his that excel in strength; praise him and magnify him for ever. O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever. O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord, praise ye him and magnify him for ever. Praise him, all ye apostles and prophets; praise him, all ye martyrs and confessors; praise him, all ye glorious lights, who have made the gospel of Christ to shine throughout the world. Praise the Father Almighty; praise his eternal Word; praise the Holy Ghost; who have made our faith to stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the mighty power of God. Praise him for the incarnation, the life, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, and the glorification of the Lord Jesus: who hath given us strong con-

[z] Heb. iii. 5, 6. [a] [1 Pet. i. 12.]

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solation, by that sure and steadfast hope, which, throughout all these means, he hath settled in our hearts.

O praise him for his marvellous love to us, whom he hath called after a glorious manner, and by an amazing virtue, to the knowledge of Christ; by whom *his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.* And make us, who are so nearly concerned in this love, to be very sensible how great it is: which hath not only *called us to his heavenly kingdom*, but made us sure and certain by so many witnesses that Jesus is the Lord of all, the King of infinite majesty, power, and glory. Let our souls never cease to *show forth* and publish *the virtues* and powerful operations *of him who hath called us into his marvellous light.* Let our mouths be filled with his praise all the day long, who, out of the riches of his mercy, hath made us, who were not his people, to be *a chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar people* to himself.

O that our *faith may grow exceedingly*, and be deeply rooted and grounded in our hearts! And as it stands upon the surest foundations, so we may be built up in it with the most assured confidence, and stand unshaken and immovable in it unto the end. And as thou hast differenced us from all other people, in the clearness of that light which lets us see that ours is the *most holy faith*, so help us, by thy grace, to distinguish ourselves from all others, by *holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience*, and by the upright actions of an unblameable life.

O that the light of Christians may so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify thee our heavenly Father. O that it may disperse the darkness which overspreads so great a part of the world: that all impostors may be discovered: and they that live in error may be brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. O that his dominion may reach from sea to sea, even unto the world's end. Let them who dwell in the most desert places kneel before him, and his enemies lick the dust. Let all kings of the earth adore him, and all nations do him service. Kindle in the hearts of princes and nobles an holy ambition to advance his glory. Inspire the hearts of all bishops and priests with an ardent zeal for the conversion of souls: and dispose the hearts of those who are in error, that they may be apt and ready to receive thy sacred truth. Plant thy gospel where it hath not yet been, and replant it where it hath been rooted out: and give us grace who have long been thine own vineyard, to bring forth plenty of good fruit: that our lives may be as holy as our faith; and we may convince Jews, Turks, and all other infidels that thou art among us, and

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that Jesus, whom we worship, is the Lord. To him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory and praise among all mankind, and throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

CHAP. X.

Other necessary uses we are to make of their testimony.

THERE is no great skill required to see the difference between that holy religion which we profess, and all others that are entertained in the rest of the world. Some we must have; and it is as palpable that this is incomparably the most excellent, as it is that there is any religion at all. There is no nation so barbarous but "pays some respect and ceremony (to use the phrase of Tully[y] when he defines religion) to some superior and more excellent nature, which we call divine:" though they are ignorant what kind of God it becomes them to have, yet they know a God must be had, and must be worshipped. Their own mind teaches them this as soon as they cast their eyes upon the admirable frame of the world, which all naturally conclude must have had some most wise and mighty builder. But what respect and reverence that is which will be pleasing to him, they are very uncertain, it is manifest, by the various ways they have invented to express their devotion. They all, with one consent, acknowledge a necessity of a revelation to instruct them; for there is no nation but pretends to have received some things by the instinct, inspiration, or apparition of their gods. That which pure natural reason dictates is not to be found simple and unmixed in any nation under heaven: for if we should stand merely to that, it hath ever resolved that the worship of God consists in the study of wisdom, justice, and all other virtues: which, as they are most eminent in God, so he is best pleased with them in us. And they that addict themselves to resemble him in this manner are the men that shall obtain his favour. There are a number of notable sayings both in heathen and Christian writers to this purpose: but when all this is said and acknowledged, men will offend against these rules of virtue; and what shall they do then? what will make him satisfaction, and procure a reconciliation

[y] [De Invent. ii. 53.—"Religio est, quæ superioris cujusdam naturæ, quam divinam vocant, curam cærimoniamque affert."]

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with him, (whom they have reason to think their offences have made their enemy,) is a thing that can never be certainly resolved without a revelation; without which also we can have little security of the immortality of our souls and of the life to come. Which hath inclined all mankind to listen after a revelation, and to catch at any thing which pretends to come from God to them. For, as Plato acknowledges (when he ordains there should be no alterations made in the ancient customs about sacrifices, because) "it is not possible for mortal nature to know any thing of these matters" without it. "No," says he, (not long after in the same book[z]) "as nobody shall ever persuade me that there is any greater piety than true virtue, and as there is nothing more excellent can be taught than how those that honour virtue should rightly worship God with sacrifices and other rites of purifying; so none can teach this, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ὑφηγοῖτο, 'unless God show him the way,' and be his Guide and Leader in so excellent a work." But if we search into all the records that are in the world, what is there that can stand in competition with the Christian way of worshipping God, or pretend to come with such authority from him? I have examined those that have most to say for themselves, and they can produce no such *witnesses* as Christianity doth: no, not that ancient revelation made by God to Moses. As for the old Pagan ways, which were very various, I am ashamed to mention them. It is manifest they suffered themselves to be cheated by impure spirits, and took the answers of demons for the oracles of God. But *ask now of the days that are past, which were before us, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it*[a], that God indeed appeared among men, and was *manifest in the flesh:* as is evident by all the signs and wonders and mighty deeds, by voices from heaven, by his resurrection from the dead, and all the other witnesses which have testified this truth to the world. Ask again, hath God ever assured men of any thing by so many and evident testimonies as those which I have produced? *Unto us it was shown, that we might know* that Jesus is the Lord, and *beside*

[z] In Epinom. [p. 989 D.]

[a] [Deut. iv. 32.]

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him there is no other (if I may again allude to the words of Moses[b]). *Out of heaven he hath made us hear his voice, that he might instruct us;* and *upon earth* he hath shown us his great wonders, *that every tongue might confess Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

III.

That now is the next thing I am to press, as a necessary consequence of what hath been said in the foregoing treatise. Though there were such slender proofs, in comparison with ours, that God spake to Moses, and though others, as I said, were drawn away by the subtleties of evil angels, yet they all believed and gave great reverence to that which was delivered to them. Every nation gladly received and held fast that which did but pretend to come from heaven: which must needs extremely reproach us, and put us to eternal shame, if we, having better evidences, should not only be believers, but have a stronger faith in Jesus. That which Plato thought was to be wished for is now come to pass: "God is come to be our Guide and Director." The very Wisdom of the Father hath appeared to teach us: he that made all the world is come down hither to reform us: the *Word is made flesh*, that, as he had *principatum in cœlis* (to use the words of Irenæus[c]), 'the lordship in heaven,' so he might have *principatum in terra*, 'the same sovereignty upon earth.' He hath appeared also in wonderful and astonishing brightness, to convince us of his authority, and to make us know assuredly that he is *God blessed for ever.* Shall we not then hear his words? shall we not deliver up ourselves to receive his heavenly instruction, which came with such powerful demonstration? God forbid that any of us should be so perverse, as, hearing such *witnesses* speak unto us for the Lord Jesus, we should give no credit to them.

I cannot but believe, as St. Austin[d] excellently discourses, "that if Plato now lived, and would vouchsafe to answer my questions; or rather, if any scholar of his, being persuaded that truth is not to be seen with corporal eyes, but by a pure mind, and that nothing hinders the sight more than a life ad-

[b] Deut. iv. 34, 35.

[c] Lib. iv. cap. 37. [al. cap. 20. [tom. i. col. 748, 50.] part. 1. p. 253.]

[d] Lib. de Vera Relig. cap. 3.

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dicted to lust, and false images of sensible things, which, impressed on us, beget various errors; and that therefore the mind is to be purified, that it may behold that unchangeable beauty which is always the same, and always like itself; . . . if, I say, a scholar of his, thus taught by him, should ask him whether, in case there should be a man great and divine, that should persuade the people at least to believe such things, though they could not perceive them (or if they did perceive them, were so engaged in vulgar errors that they durst not or could not oppose them), he would not judge him worthy of divine honour: I believe he would answer, that this could not be done by man, unless perhaps the very power and wisdom of God should honour some person (who was not taught of men, but from the cradle illuminated by the most intimate knowledge of things) with so great a grace, and strengthen him with such resolution, and bear him up with such a majesty, that, contemning all things that evil men desire, and enduring all things that they dread, and doing all things that they admire, he should convert mankind, with equal kindness and authority, to so wholesome a faith. And he would add, that it was to no purpose to ask him what the honours are which ought to be given to such a person, when it is easy to be discerned what honour is due to the wisdom of God; by the guidance and governance of which he would singularly deserve of mankind, and do something for their salvation proper only to himself, and which was above men to do. Now if these things which I have supposed be really done; if there be good records of them; if from a country in which alone one God was worshipped, and where such a person was to be born, there came chosen men, who by their virtues and their sermons have kindled in men's breasts the flame of the divine love, and have left the enlightened earth under a most wholesome discipline; if every where it is preached, that *in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;* if to the perceiving and embracing this (that the soul may be cured, and recover strength to entertain so great a light), the covetous hear such words as these, *Lay not up your treasures upon earth;* and the luxurious are told that *he who soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;* and the proud are told that *he who exalteth himself shall be abased;* the angry

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are exhorted *when one cheek is smitten to turn the other;* they that live in discord are taught to *love their enemies;* the superstitious are instructed that *the kingdom of God is within us;* to the curious it is said continually, *Look not at the things that are seen, but to those which are not seen;* and, lastly, it is said to all, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world:* if these things are read throughout the world; if they be cheerfully heard with great veneration; if after so much blood, such fires, so many crucifixions of martyrs, the church is grown more fertile, and hath propagated itself to the most barbarous nations; and (to omit the rest) if men are every where so converted to God, that every day all mankind answers almost with one voice, LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS UNTO THE LORD; why should we drowsily still continue in a sottish unbelief?"

There is nothing can be said in the excuse of such souls as, having received notice of such a marvellous love of God to mankind, and such evident proofs that it is no fancy, will not be persuaded to entertain the belief of it; but, when light is come into the world, choose to remain in darkness, and will be guided merely by themselves, when there is a revelation come from God: which ought to be entertained with the greatest joy, as the thing which the world wanted and wished for; and without which they could meet with no resolution of their doubts, nor certain directions how to please God, whom they had so highly offended. In this the Christian religion gives us full satisfaction, and propounds nothing to our practice but what the wisest men ever said was best to be done, and took for the most excellent piety. As for that which it propounds to our belief, it is all made credible by this one great truth, which is proved by a number of witnesses, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* We ought to receive that which such a person taught, either with his own mouth, or by those whom he inspired, and sent in the same manner as the Father sent him. For if it be so reasonable, as I have demonstrated, to be a believer, then it is as unreasonable to be an unbeliever: and no man will be able to open his mouth to justify such a sin, against so many witnesses as will appear to testify that they called him to the faith by the clearest and the most powerful evidences that ever were. For if the Jews were bound to be-

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lieve in Moses, having no more testimony from God than you have heard, we are much more bound to believe in Jesus, who hath more and greater witnesses that he not only came from God, but is gone to God, and hath all things given into his hands, whether in heaven or in earth. As it was said of them, therefore, that *they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses*[e]; so let it be said of every one now, that we believe the Lord, and his Son Jesus. For this very end were these words written by St. John, that *we may believe on his name*[f]. And this is the sum of what God would have us to do, the commandment he hath given us, *that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another*[g]. If we do the former, we shall see an evident consequence of the latter: for when we are persuaded that he is the Son of God, we cannot but see that we ought to receive every word that he says with affectionate reverence, and to let every thing that is said concerning him into our very hearts; so that we fear him, and love him, and become obedient to him, and depend upon his word, and, as he himself hath taught us, honour him, as we do the Father Almighty.

For we are assured by those who heard him, and were with him from the beginning, and were witnesses of his resurrection, and received the Holy Ghost from him, that he was the *Word made flesh;* and that the *Word was God, and all things were made by him*, and is the *Son of God* not by office only, but in his nature and essence, and, having assumed our flesh, therein reigns *Lord of all* for ever. For what reason should we refuse to receive that which is so credibly witnessed to be the very truth of God? They that report these things were so pious, as I have proved, that they cannot be suspected to have invented them; nay, the very end for which they published them quits them from all suspicion of fraud and forgery; for they aimed at nothing but by making man sensible of his great dignity, and the high honour God hath put upon him, to possess his heart with an ardent love to God and to his neighbour, and to make him perfectly subject unto his will. And is there not great reason, if we believe what these witnesses say, that we should apply our best endeavours to please him, by living soberly, righteously, and godly, and by abstain-

[e] Exod. xiv. 31. [f] 1 John v. 13. [g] iii. 23.

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ing from the least *appearance of evil?* Think what Jesus was, and then resolve with yourselves what regard is due to his word. Will not the wicked man tremble when he hears him say that none shall go to heaven but they that do the will of his Father which is in heaven? Then he does not believe that these are the words of the Son of God, or does not mind what he reads. Who can with any face call him Lord, Lord, and not acknowledge that he ought to do the things that he says? And to acknowledge this, and not do those things, what a madness is that, if we believe our Lord is able to call us to a severe account for our neglect of his will! What is there that can recommend chastity and purity of heart to our affection, together with mercifulness, meekness, peaceableness, poverty or contentedness of spirit, the humility of little children, faith in God's providence, and such like virtues, if this will not; that the Son of God hath preached them to the world as the most amiable qualities in the eyes of God, without which we shall never see him, nor inherit his heavenly kingdom? Are not these his words? Do not his sermons teach us these lessons? And if we do these things, does he not say we shall *have everlasting life*, and *enter into his joy*, and *see the glory which God hath given him?* For what cause do we question whether this be the way to happiness? Do not the same witnesses which tell us that he is the Son of God testify withal that he came to teach us God's will, and that this is his will which by the gospel is declared unto us? Why do we not seriously believe it then, let me ask again? Are not the witnesses good who affirm that Jesus is the Son of God? have we not examined them, and find no cause why we should reject them? Or will you receive nothing upon the credit of a witness? That is a very strange obstinacy, which rejects so certain a way of knowing many things that cannot be otherways known.

For the notices of things do not come to us all one way, but by divers means, either by our senses, or by our reason and discourse, or by report. By all these ways the knowledge of things is conveyed to our mind, and if we refuse to be informed by any of them, there are a great number of things, certainly true and of great consequence to us, of which we must remain ignorant. That there are other countries far distant from this where we live, and that such and such things are there to be

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had, and have been there done, most men can know by no means but only by report, for there are but few that can go and see. And he that will not receive the testimony of another in this case deprives himself of a considerable piece of knowledge whereof others partake, and which might be as useful to him as it proves to them. But if for this wilful loss he shall pretend to assign a just cause, saying that he cannot believe any thing unless it be demonstrated to him by clear and evident consequences from principles of known reason, he will become ridiculous. For it is absurd to expect the knowledge of any thing in any other way but that which is proper for its conveyance to us. To demand a proof of a matter of reason from our senses, or for what we discern by our senses from our reason, is equally ridiculous; and so it is to demand an evidence for things of faith (which we know by report only) either from our senses or our reason. That there are some things come to our notice only by faith, is plain from what passes every day: and it is as plain, that they must be proved to be true in their proper way; that is, by the soundness of the testimony upon which we receive them. As no man requires a reason for what he sees and feels, nor asks that he may see with his eyes that of which he reasons and discourses, so he ought not to seek for a testimony of sense or reason for that which he can know by no way but by report. As for example: no man demands a reason to prove that the sun shines; in this his sense gives him satisfaction, and if he were born blind no reason could prove to him that it was not night. Nor does any man that is in his wits require that he may behold God with his eyes, whom he knows by discourse and the reason of his mind, and knows him also by that to be invisible. In like manner it is altogether preposterous, when a man comes and reports that such a person died on such a day, to ask for a reason to prove it, or to demand that he may see it, for it is impossible to see him die again upon that day. That is not a thing to be known either of those ways, by sense or reason, but only by the testimony of others who were present at that time, and are, we think, worthy of belief. Why do we ask then for any other proof that Jesus was born of a virgin at such a time, did such wonderful works, preached such an holy doctrine, was crucified, dead and buried, rose again from the

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dead, ascended to heaven, and sent from thence the Holy Ghost? These are not things now to be seen or felt, nor can we gather them from the mere discourse of our own reason, which tells us nothing of them; but we have them by report from a great many witnesses, who say they saw, and heard, and felt all that which they would have us believe. There is no other use of reason in this case, but only to examine and judge whether this report be credible, and founded in the testimony of God. Now that is evident to any impartial inquirer, from what hath been said concerning these witnesses, whose report there is no reason to suspect, as it is certain it can never be disproved. Why should we then be so much our own enemies as to deprive ourselves of this saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? that is, why do we not give credit to the report of these witnesses concerning Jesus; since, by the only proper means whereby such things can be proved, I have made it good that the Father declared him to be his Son; and he appeared in glory to testify to himself; and the Holy Ghost demonstrated he could be no less; and his life, death, resurrection, and all the rest (of which there were so many upright witnesses) assure us that it is a certain truth. Would we be so difficult to be persuaded to go to a man or a place, where several honest neighbours informed us upon their word, nay, upon their life, we should be promoted to great honour, or be possessed of a fair estate? Do we not believe one another in our daily traffic? and drive considerable bargains, merely upon the credit we give to some persons, who inform us of the advantage we may make by them? Do not men undertake long journeys, and more dangerous voyages, merely because they are told that such an one is dead to whom they are heir, or that such rich commodities are to be had in exchange for meaner goods? Who is there that does not desire his witnesses may be accepted and their testimony taken for good proof, either to clear his innocence, or to settle his estate? Now, says the apostle, (immediately after the alleging of all these witnesses in heaven and in earth to prove the truth of Christianity,) *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.*

The meaning of which is this: If men whose honesty you cannot impeach give their testimony in a court of judicature, it is never disallowed, nor can you be permitted to set it by and

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make nothing of it, but it is necessarily admitted for an end of strife. The weightiest causes are decided, all matters depending are determined and judged according to the evidence that is given by witnesses of unblemished faith. *In the mouth of two or three witnesses* (as the known saying was) *every word* (or rather matter) *is established*[g]: that is, brought to an issue and concluded, if any controversy have arose to unsettle it. Nay, the testimony of one man, if we have no reason to suspect his credit, is in our own private thoughts, though not in law, satisfaction great enough to assure us of the truth of what he says; and we think it such a reproach to give him the lie, that we cannot but believe him, finding a desire in the same case to be believed ourselves. Now if things stand thus between us and our neighbours, will we not allow God (says the apostle) as much as we yield to them? Shall not his word determine and conclude us? When he gives evidence of a thing, shall we still dispute it with him? That, besides the undutifulness of it, is too great a stubbornness. We may rather be taught how to behave ourselves towards him, by the measure men expect from us, and we from them; yea, God does more deserve credit than any man; for, as he adds, *the witness of God is greater*, i. e. of far more validity and certainty; it may more securely be relied on than the witness of any men whatsoever. God is not only greater than men, but his witness also or testimony is greater, (which must be carefully noted;) it is of more force and strength to support any conclusion; we may more undoubtedly found our faith upon it, because it is not liable to any of those exceptions which may prejudice the best testimony of men. Two things there are that lessen the testimony of men, if we compare it with God's, and make it to be of a nature more weak and infirm. The one is, that though a man be reputed honest, and therefore we cannot legally except against his testimony, yet it is possible he may be a deceiver, and we cannot look into his heart to know whether he be or no. We may not be able to prove the least deceit by him, in what he says or ever has said or done, and it is possible he never delivered any thing contrary to truth, or did any thing contrary to justice; but yet we can never free our mind from this thought, since we know not his inward man, that there is

[g] [Deut. xix. 15; Matt. xviii. 16.]

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a possibility also it may be otherwise with him. But then secondly, suppose him perfectly honest, and that it is impossible he should put a cheat upon us; yet it will be always possible that he may be cheated himself, because all men are fallible and may be mistaken. The greatest integrity in the world cannot secure a man, but the weakness of his understanding and the subtlety of others may sometimes impose upon him; so that, though he thinks what he says to be true, it may be otherwise in itself than it is in his thoughts. Herein therefore the testimony of God is greater than the testimony of men, that it is not liable to either of these suspicions, it being utterly impossible that he should either be deceived himself, or that he should deceive us. He can neither lead us into an error, (which we all acknowledge to be contrary to his goodness and truth,) nor fall into one himself, which is as contrary to the perfection of his understanding and his omnipresent being. The testimony of God then being so indubitable that it is above the testimony of any men, it ought with all reverence to be received when he declares that *Jesus is his Son;* for if it were but equal to human testimony, it ought not to be refused. Now *this is the witness of God,* says the apostle, *which he hath testified of his Son:* that is, it being granted to be most rational that we should receive the testimony of God, nay, give it greater respect than we bear to that of men, I assure you that the evidence which we give you concerning Jesus is the very testimony of God, and therefore do not slight it. It is not we that bear witness to him so much as God. We do not desire you to hear merely what we say, but what God himself hath said, who hath given many assurances of this truth. If there were but two of them, they might by your own rules very well expect to find entertainment; but there are no less than six witnesses, every one of them divine, they all speak from God, and therefore you cannot deny your assent to what they prove. For the first witness is God the Father himself, who called Jesus *his well-beloved Son.* And the second is the Word of God, upon which account, whatsoever he says is God's testimony also. The Holy Ghost, which is the third, that *proceeds from the Father,* and came on purpose to bear witness to his Son. As for the fourth (water), the doctrine was of God, his life was the life of God; John's baptism was

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from heaven, and he is called *a man sent from God*[g]. Then, for the blood, which is the fifth witness, it is called *God's own blood*[h]. And it appeared to be his, by his gathering it up again after it was shed, and taking it into the heavens, where he appears with it in the presence of God for us. And the last of these witnesses is expressly called *the Spirit of God*[i]. So that it is God, you see, who so many ways bears witness of his Son; there is something divine in every one of these witnesses, in those on earth as well as in those in heaven; and therefore we cannot without an affront to God reject their testimony. For then he would have worse measure from us than men have, and we should give less respect to six witnesses of his than to two or three of our neighbours. If Jesus came not with clear demonstrations, with fulness of proof, then deny him any admittance; but if God hath so many ways justified him to be his Son, if his life was so excellent, his blood so holy, his Spirit so divine, then we shall never be able to justify it before any knowing man, much less before God, if we do not believe him, and that heartily and fully in every thing; no more doubting of the truth of what he says than we do of those things which our eyes and our ears report to us, or of those which are delivered unto us upon the faith of the whole world.

For which end it should be our endeavour that our faith may rest upon a sure and strong foundation; and be laid on such grounds, that it may stand the faster in a time of temptation. The ignorant man's faith indeed may be as strong as his that knows most, and what he hath learnt by education may be so confirmed by custom, that he will never stir from it; but is only the effect of nature, which produces the same resolutions in those who are of other religions. The Christian way of obtaining a strong faith is, first to *see the Son*, and then *to believe on him to everlasting life*, as our Saviour himself teaches us[j]. To *see him* is to perceive and discern by evident tokens that he is the Son of God, the true way to life: upon which sight and plain demonstrations we ought to *believe in him*, and submit unto him as our Lord. That is the true Christian faith, which flows from knowledge, and is founded upon the understanding

[g] John i. 6. [h] Acts xx. 28. [i] Matt. xii. 28. [j] John vi. 40.

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of what such witnesses as these say concerning Jesus. It relies upon the testimony of the *Father*, of the *Word*, and of the *Holy Ghost;* is wrought by the *Spirit*, and confirmed by *Water* and *Blood*. And therefore we ought to study this place of holy Scripture, and have it much in our thoughts, that so our *faith may stand in the power of God*[k]. For otherwise, how shall we be able to follow the apostolical precept, which would have us, when we are questioned, *to render a reason of the hope that is in us*[l]*?* We may be able to stand our ground, though we be ignorant of the true causes of belief; but the enemies of it will look upon it as a foolish obstinacy, if we have not so much understanding as to give some other account of our faith than they give for theirs. Suppose they should say, Why are you a Christian? whence is it that you look for a resurrection, a glorious body, and eternal life in another world? Would they not think us very stupid, if we could say nothing to them but that so we have been always taught, and are resolved to believe? Would not this be as good a reason for them as it is for us? and make us unworthy of the name of Christians, who know our books no better, which bid us give, and furnish us with, a reasonable account? Consider therefore what answer you would shape to them that should make such a demand. The apostle says it is fit they should have a reason, what is the best that you can offer for their satisfaction? shall I tell you? The plain answer is this, that Jesus, whose religion we follow, was the Son of God; and therefore we believe these things because the Son of God taught us so, who cannot deceive us; and we will not exchange this for any other persuasion, though we should die for it. It is certain enough that everybody who hears this will presently consent to us, that he is a fool who doth not stoop to him and comply with us, if it be certain that Jesus is the Son of God. But how do you prove that? will be the next question. Here is the labour, this is our work; and whence will you fetch convincing arguments to make them yield to you this weighty point? There is no such compendious abridgment of them any where, that I know of, as in this place of St. John, which furnishes us with reasons both many and mighty to persuade us and others that Jesus is the Son of

[k] [1 Cor. ii. 5.] [l] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

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God. You may tell them that the Father Almighty said so, by voices from heaven, in the audience of credible persons; and that the Word said so, as they may be informed of St. Paul, who had no reason greater than this to force him to leave all, and with the daily hazard of his life to follow Jesus. You may allege the testimony of the Holy Ghost, both at his baptism and afterward; the marvellous sanctity of his doctrine and life; the confession he made at his bloody death; the glory of his miraculous works; his resurrection from the dead; the power of the same Spirit in his apostles after he was gone to heaven; all the miracles which were wrought long after their times, in the places where the holy martyrs of Jesus suffered; together with the wonderful success of these witnesses, who persuaded innumerable people in all countries to become the subjects of this crucified King, Christ Jesus.

Study this place therefore, I say again, very well, that you may be able to oppress any gainsayer with the great weight of those reasons which you render of your faith. And study it likewise, till you feel the faith of Jesus doing something in your hearts; till that faith which hath so good a cause have suitable effects; that is, till it change you, as it is ever apt to do, into the nature of that cause from whence it flows. It comes from God; see that it carry you to him, and change you into his likeness. It relies on his testimony; be sure that it make you perfectly of his mind. It comes with the authority from the word of God itself, and from the Holy Ghost; let it mightily inspire you with devotion to him, and set your affections on things above, where Christ is now at God's right hand. It relies upon the purity of his holy doctrine and life; and therefore ought to purify our hearts, that we may behave ourselves in all holy conversation and godliness. It is founded on his blood, on which we can never look but it will deaden our affections to this world, and make us crucify the flesh, with its passions and lusts. It stands upon the power of God, and should therefore make us strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It grows, as you see, upon sundry roots, and flows from several heads; and therefore should dispose those in whose hearts it is planted to be abundant in the work of the Lord, and to bring forth much fruit; that we may be known to be indeed the disciples of Jesus, whose faith is sup-

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ported by such numerous witnesses. And this now will lead me to the next thing, which St. John here makes to be the necessary consequent of this faith, and therefore ought not to be omitted.

IV.

If there be such great, such abundant reason to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, then there is as great a necessity lying upon us to be obedient unto him, and punctually to observe all his commands. This faith both requires our submission and obedience to him, and also gives us power and ability to perform it. It is a mere trick of the devil, another piece of his sophistry, when he cannot dig up the foundation of Christianity (which I told you was his first endeavour), to hinder all superstructure upon it; by persuading Christian people that faith and obedience are no necessary companions; but that they may be good believers, and yet not keep Christ's precepts. Some think they need not; and others, which is the same cheat in another shape, think they cannot. But I appeal to every man's conscience, if he be a believer, whether he do not perceive his heart overawed, and his will inclined to reverence and subjection, and all his powers mightily moved to tender their service, when he seriously thinks that Jesus is the Lord, to whom God the Father hath committed all judgment, and will render to every man according to his works. Do you not feel this faith carrying a great authority with it? Nay, is there not an irresistible energy and virtue in it, while you attend to it, pressing you to conformity with his holy will? Who can gainsay this? And who can say then that his faith does not both engage and enable him to be obedient to his Saviour, if he do but mind what he believes? He never thinks of that but it powerfully urges and constrains him to yield himself to be a faithful servant of Jesus, in every thing that he declares to be the mind and will of God. These uncontrollable inclinations declare to us so plainly the tendency and natural disposition of Christian faith, that we cannot but see it is so far from being separable from obedience, that this is essentially included in it, and freely flows from it, if it may be but suffered to have its course, and not be crossed in its clear intention and design. If you be not convinced of this by what you feel, you may learn it of St. John, who tells you here what the natural issue of our

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faith is, and what duty it exacts: for it is the scope of these words which I have expounded, to lay such a foundation of belief as may unavoidably enforce obedience, unless we forget what our belief is. He begins, you know, this fifth chapter of his Epistle with this principle, that *every one who believes Jesus to be the Christ is born of God:* and from thence infers (in that and in the second verse) that such a person cannot but *love God and all his brethren:* which love cannot be discerned by any thing but *by keeping his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments*[m]. Here is the natural fruit of faith; this is its progress, if you do not stop its motions. It begets in our heart a great love; and love is to be obedient, and that to all God's commandments, which respect either our duty to him or to our neighbour. It is in vain to say we believe in Jesus, if we do not heartily love God who sent him to us. And it is in vain to pretend love to God, if we keep not his commandments. And it is as vain to say we have a dutiful respect to his commandments, if our neighbour have any cause to complain of us. *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also*[n].

Here now, they who have less understanding of the grounds of faith may make up what is wanting in their knowledge by the heartiness of their devotion to God, and the unfeignedness of their love to all their brethren. If they be mightily affected with what they believe, and out of an honest love in their hearts to his holy precepts be very diligent in their obedience, it will supply the defect that is in their understanding of the reasons why they believe in Jesus. For if a small argument in a weak and dull understanding does the same work with a strong argument in a quick and piercing, where lies the difference, but only that the one can serve religion more with his mind and discourse, the other merely with his good will and his pious life? But will any man presume to be so impious as to employ his will to find out ways to excuse his obedience to him whom he acknowledges for his Lord? He should rather consider seriously how reasonable and how necessary it

[m] 1 John v. 3. [n] iv. 20, 21.

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is, that he who knows so well what Jesus is, and how *he came,* should above all other men do him the most faithful and zealous service. For if we do but observe how many arguments here are to persuade us to this faith in Jesus, with what authority he was sent, and with what power he came to us; we shall think it was for some very great work; and feel it impossible, while we are sensible of this, not to do what he requires, though now perhaps it seem impossible to be done. He is not come of himself, but hath the mark and stamp of the supreme Lord upon him. He evidently shows that he hath a commission from God; and brings (as I may say) the broad seal of heaven with him, to warrant what he demands, though it be never so great a tribute of obedience. Here are *witnesses* to him above all exception; and they all bid us behave ourselves submissively towards him, and not deny to do any thing that he would have us. *Him hath God the Father sealed,* as he tells us [n], and by his voice from heaven commands us to *hear him.* Which was as if he had said, If you will believe him that cannot lie, then Jesus is the *Truth:* to every word of whose mouth we ought to hearken; that is, faithfully obey and observe. For as God is said to hear us when he grants our desires; so we hear him or his Son when we fulfil his pleasure. The *Word* likewise (2), when he appeared to St. Paul, made him an apostle *for obedience to the faith among all nations* [o]: and told him expressly that he appeared to him for this end, that he might send him to the Gentiles, *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God* [p]. The *Holy Ghost* likewise (3) is a witness of this, which was *given to those that obeyed him* [q]. But looked upon all wickedness as an high affront to it; at which it was *grieved,* and by which it was *quenched;* nay, forced to *depart,* as not enduring to dwell in the same house with filthiness and impurity. Unto which the *Water* (4), or the holy life and purity of our Saviour in all his actions as well as his doctrine, was directly opposite: and tells us that we must be obedient, if there were no other reason for it but this alone, that the Son of God himself was so in every thing. Did God exact obedience of him, that he might demand none of us? Will he set us free

[n] John vi. 27. [o] Rom. i. 5. [p] Acts xxvi. 18. [q] Acts v. 32.

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from that duty and service, to which his dearly beloved Son was strictly tied? He fulfilled all righteousness, and observed even that law of ceremonies, to which we have no obligation. And do we think to be hereby excused from paying all those respects which are naturally due from creatures to the author of their being, and which we cannot but owe to those who are of the same kind with us? What is it that hath so perverted the understanding of Christian people as to possess them with apprehensions quite contrary to common reason? What ails us that we cannot see the end of Christ's coming, nay, that we overlook the plain words of his holy Scriptures, which tell us, that he *left us an example*, and expects that we should *follow* it, and be *made conformable* to him, and be *renewed after his image*, in righteousness and true holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord?* This the blood (5) speaks still more effectually. For he would die rather than disobey God. *He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross*[r]; which was the reason why God so highly exalted him, and gave him that name which he hath above every name. There was no other way whereby he could ascend up into glory: and therefore it is madness for us to think to leap up thither, and skip over the holy life of Jesus. Especially since he declares, that his blood was shed (to which perhaps we trust for redemption, though we remain in our impurities) *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*[s]. To the doing of which (6) he hath given us the *Spirit* for our helper. Every miracle that it wrought (to say nothing but what is within the verge of these words) bids us consider what a potent Lord we serve, for whom nothing is too hard. By a thousand wonders, by more miraculous works than we could have had time to read, should they have been all written, did he awake the sleepy world; commanding them to arise, and go about his work, and he would be with them, his power, which nothing can withstand, should aid and succour them. The obedience, methinks, which the winds and the sea, and the fishes, and the graves, and the devils themselves paid him, call upon us and tell us both what we ought to do, and what assistance we may expect from the

[r] Phil. ii. 8. [s] Tit. ii. 14.

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power of his might to make us obedient to his faith. Who can resist the joint importunity of so many witnesses? who can hear all these tell us, that *the Son of God is come,* by whom we must be governed, and yet be so senselessly obstinate, as to say, *We will not have this man to rule over us?* O deaf ears! O hearts harder than the nether millstone! which will not let such loud voices sink into them, such mighty arguments penetrate and mollify them into compliance with him! What can reduce such souls and bring them under any government, who will not be reclaimed by the authority of the Son of God? I may *call heaven and earth to witness* against such obdurate hearts. The Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, these are witnesses in heaven, that testify it is our duty and interest too to submit ourselves unto him. The Water, Blood, and the Spirit, they are witnesses on earth, which agree together to persuade us to take his easy yoke upon us. Can neither heaven nor earth prevail with us? Is not *God the Father* Almighty great enough to lay his commands upon us? Is the *Word* of God of less credit than the common vogue and opinion of the world with us? Cannot the *Holy Ghost* be believed concerning the place from whence it comes, when it says that no unclean thing shall enter in thither? Do we think his *holy life* to be a troublesome folly, and despise his *blood,* and resist his *Spirit,* and receive all the grace of God in vain? *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;* after God had sent many of his servants, who were disregarded, he last of all sent his Son into the world, saying, Surely *they will reverence my Son;* but they have rebelled against him.

I might call for hell itself to witness against such perverse and disloyal creatures. The devils will not fail to accuse such men hereafter: for *they believe and tremble;* they acknowledge this great truth, that *Jesus is the Holy One of God*[t]: which is the very same that Jesus himself said, when he tells us *the Father hath sanctified him* (i. e. made him his Holy One), *and sent him into the world*[u]. And that is more, I doubt, than a great many irreligious spirits will confess; in their works, I am sure, the most of the Christian world utterly deny it. Do you think the devils who made that confession would have disobeyed him if they might have taken our place,

[t] Luke iv. 34. [u] John x. 36.

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and had his salvation offered to them? Would they not have shaken off their chains, and taken upon them his yoke, had they received such gracious invitations as he hath made to us? Let us not be worse than they, I beseech you, by casting away that hope which was never given them, and slighting such tenders of mercy which are peculiarly directed to the children of men. But let us rather admire, adore, and magnify this amazing love of God, who sent his Son so kindly to speak to such wretches as we are. And let us show that we are sensible of his love by hearkening to his voice, and readily submitting ourselves with all dutiful, nay, joyful affection to his commands. *See*, I beseech you again, *that you refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven*[u]. Let all his laws be held most sacred, and be devoutly reverenced and observed. Know that this is *your wisdom and understanding;* nay, remember that it is *your life: and therefore keep your souls diligently, lest you forget those things which you have heard, and lest they depart from your hearts all the days of your life*[v]. Choose death rather than the life of the *unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, who*, he hath pronounced, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*[w]. Do you not remember how observant the children of Jonadab the son of Rechab were of their father's commandment, and how they could not be tempted, no, not by a prophet, to contradict it[x]? What arguments, I pray you, had they (so reasonable and moving as those which urge us) for this injunction? Might they not have slipped many ways with better colour than we can do from this obligation? Did there want plausible pretences to plead their excuse if they had absolved themselves and not observed it? Might they not have said that every creature of God was good, and none to be refused? That their stomachs sometimes required a little wine, and that it was reasonable to give them satisfaction? That their father had gone beyond his authority, and taken away the just liberty which God had left them? That they were restrained enough by the divine laws, and that there

[u] [Heb. xii. 25.] [v] [Deut. iv. 6, 9.] [w] [1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.]
[x] Jer. xxxv. 6.

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needed no more of his making? O the insensibleness and ingratitude of Christian people that can think of these men's reverence to so severe and hard a command of their father, and be less obedient to their most gracious Lord! What a forehead hath that man who dares venture to break any of his precepts, when he hath so many reasons to believe that he hath laid none upon us but those which are the very mind and will of God, and are such a necessary indispensable burden, that unless we carry them we cannot be saved! There is nothing that can be pretended why we should not strictly tie ourselves to his will. Not only the love which engaged the Rechabites enforces our obedience, but infinitely more reason than there was in their father's will and pleasure, for we are assured that Jesus is the Son of God. He could not but have a perfect understanding of what was fit and convenient for us. If there had been any other way more easy to heaven than this he hath set before us, we cannot but think he would have revealed it unto us. If there were any license that could be granted us to dispense with our obedience, he was not so unkind as to conceal it: much less would he have taken it upon his death that none will be allowed: for he declared openly in his sermons that he will not only take no knowledge of those who work iniquity, but bid them depart from him, whatsoever relation they pretend to him. And by his blood he assures us that he preached nothing but the undoubted truth of God. What is it then that makes men still continue either to slight all that he says, or to give him the lie? It is no better if we presume to believe that we shall shift well enough in another world, though we do what we list while we are here. It is to contradict the voice of the Father, of the Word, and of the Holy Ghost. It is to oppose the doctrine, the life, the sufferings, the power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, who all tell us that we must be holy and unblameable before him in love if we hope to be accepted with him. They that live wickedly and yet hope well do in effect say that he is a liar, and that there is no such necessity of holiness, without which, he says, no man shall see the Lord: or else they despise that blessed sight, which is as bad, and neither dread his displeasure nor desire his favour. If they be believers, then they reproach him by their wicked lives, as if he were still dead, and could do no

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more to make his disciples better, or to reward and punish their good and bad behaviour, than Mahomet can, or any other impostor. All the oaths, curses, and blasphemies which we hear out of Christian mouths are as so many spears to pierce our Saviour again, because they sorely wound his religion, and tend to the destruction of his kingdom and government. All the lasciviousness, wantonness, and filthy debaucheries that are among us are a kind of crucifying Jesus afresh; they are a scoff and mock at his cross, as a ridiculous piece of folly. They reproach him as if he were an idiot that did not understand pleasure, but would put himself to unnecessary pain and trouble. Nor can we put a much better interpretation upon men's eager pursuit of riches and honours in unjust, uncharitable, and irreligious ways, which charges him with great ignorance, to say no worse, who took the quite contrary course to happiness. As for all those who gibe at his religion, and make themselves sport with the history of his birth and of his sufferings, they come under another rank, being open and professed enemies to his Majesty. They do as much as in them lies to hang him upon the gibbet again, and expose him to the scorn of the world. They justify the Jews in their calumnies and blasphemies, and take part with Judas, or rather are worse than he, who was tempted only by his covetousness to betray him. And better it had been for these men if they never had been born. It were better for them that a millstone were hanged about their neck, and they were cast into the sea, or that they had been hanged themselves on a gallows as high as that of Haman, than that they should live thus to expose the Saviour of the world to shame. For though he will not die and rise again to convince them, yet he will come and appear again to condemn them. *He will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance of all them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*[y]. Let us therefore take good heed to ourselves, that we be neither faithless nor unfaithful to our belief. But let us settle such an unmovable faith in our souls upon these strong

[y] 2 Thess. i. 8, 9.

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foundations which God hath laid for it, and let us so stir it up by new reflections every day on what we believe, that we may have our portion among those who are spoken of in the next words: *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*[z].

But some perhaps will pretend that there are so many things to hinder every man from doing his duty, that though he believe never so well, and think obedience never so necessary, yet he shall never be able to comply with the commands of the Lord Jesus, but must be forced to break them, even after he hath resolved the contrary. To this St. John hath here also taken care to give us an answer, when he tells us that such is the power of Christian faith, that by it we *overcome the world: for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God*[a]*?*

V.

That is the next thing therefore which I am to give a brief account of, that our Lord expects (which he would not do if he did not endue us with sufficient strength) that, in the virtue of this belief, we should get the better of all temptations which stand in the way of our duty, and would hinder us from the performance of it. By the *world*, with which we are to conflict till we overcome, is partly understood *wicked men*[b], partly the tribulations and miseries we may here endure by their and other means[c], and partly the allurements and enticing enjoyments wherewith all our senses are entertained[d]. All these oppose us, and set themselves against us, either by discouraging or else flattering us from our known duty. It is hard to be the object of hatred, contempt, or scorn; harder to endure also poverty, hunger, restraint, and such torments as the apostles and other blessed martyrs suffered; and perhaps hardest of all to resist the persuasions of pleasure, which prosperity and worldly glory bring along with them. What must a believer do when he is thus

[z] 2 Thess. i. 10. [a] 1 John v. 4, 5. [b] John xv. 18. [c] xvi. 33. [d] 1 John ii. 15, 16.

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beset? Must he be content to yield himself too weak to deal with these enemies? Must he let the *world* have the day, and declare that it was impossible to stand against its mighty forces? or will it be sufficient to enter into a conflict with them, if it be but to say that he was not false or cowardly, though he suffer himself to be overpowered by them? No, the faith of Jesus is stronger than so, if it be deeply rooted in our hearts; and will enable us to master all these, which seem to be no equal match for us. Their strength lies only in the weakness of our faith. If we *stand fast*, as the apostle speaks, *in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel*[c], they will lose their force and flee before us, and leave us victorious. These six *witnesses* are such champions, if I may so call them, that the faith which is led by them, and firmly relies upon them, cannot come off basely, but must needs be triumphant.

1. As for the hatred of men and their despisal, alas! what a contemptible thing does it seem! how does it sneak into nothing, when we look up unto Jesus, and remember that he was the Son of God, and yet endured it (as he tells his apostles[d]), and thought himself never the less glorious! It cannot be helped, but we must be scorned some time or other, if we will follow him; unless we could persuade all men to bear us company. But this is our comfort and encouragement, that this is the way to glory, and that now we are conformed to our Saviour, who by the shame of the cross hath got himself immortal honour; and that the *Father* at present approves us, the *Word* delights in us, the *Spirit* of God and of glory rests upon us; all these heavenly witnesses esteem and love us, and are pleased to see us behave ourselves worthily as Jesus did.

2. And if from hence we pass through many tribulations, and encounter such troubles and hardships as we are all desirous to avoid, they will not be able to affright or daunt him who hath this faith thus planted in his heart; *For greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world*[e]. Did not the ancient worthies and great warriors against the *world* wade through very great difficulties in the strength of a faith which was much weaker than this of ours? How did all those brave

[c] [Col. i. 23.] [d] John xv. 18. [e] [1 John iv. 4.]

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men whom you read of[f] *obtain a good report*, but *through faith*, when it had not received this promise[g]? Surely, we that understand more than they did, we who *know the Son of God is come*, not only by *Water* but by *Blood;* and who know that eternal life is in him, and have received the Holy Ghost, and are made partakers of such glorious revelations in the gospel of his grace, and who know the certainty of those things wherein we are instructed; we, I say, cannot but take the courage in the power of such a faith to behave ourselves valiantly, and with Christian resolution, in such like straits and dangers as made their fidelity so remarkable. Read what St. Peter says to encourage us: *But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*[h]. As if he should have said, It may seem a strange folly to suffer so much as you do, and you may begin to be startled at the troubles which befall you, but bear a reverend regard towards God who hath called you to this state of Christianity; do but stand in awe of his authority who hath bid you hear, that is, obey, Jesus, whatsoever it cost you; and do but tell every man what reason you have for what you do and suffer, and what hope you have in him upon this account. And then they will either cease to trouble you, or you will cease to be troubled for what they make you suffer. Now what are the reasons of our Christian hope and patience, but these which we are here treating of? If we allege these to ourselves or to others, it will soon appear that we are no fools in exposing ourselves to any dangers for righteousness' sake. The *Father* hath bidden us be true to it, so hath the *Word*, and so hath the *Holy Ghost:* every one of the other three also call upon us to be courageous: for it is a worthy cause wherein we are engaged, and we shall not lose our reward. Here are reasons enough; and they are stronger than all their adversaries. The world hath nothing to oppose so weighty as these witnesses; every one of which, I might show you (if it would not prove too tedious), lay an obligation on us not to be moved from our stead-

[f] Heb. xi. [g] Ver. 39. [h] 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15.

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fastness, but to take up our cross and to follow Jesus. And I the rather pass by these, because I think they are generally of less force than the other part of the *world*, which uses to assault mankind more dangerously.

3. I mean the alluring and enticing enjoyments here below, which we are too prone to comply withal. They are of an inveigling and insinuating nature, and may get admittance by their soft violence, when the other cannot prevail by more rough opposition. We are apt to fortify ourselves against evil things, and are many times angry they should attempt to overmaster us; but to the good things of the *world* we lie naked and open, and there is a treacherous party within that is willing they should enter, nay, ready to open the doors to them. And they are of three sorts, as the forenamed place in this Epistle tells us, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*[1]. All that the *world* contains in it, for the captivating of an earthly man's affections and satisfying his desires, is comprehended under one of these three names. For the understanding of which, you must know that the Hebrews have a manner of speech which expresses the *object* by the *act:* and the clearest interpretation of these words is grounded on that use of theirs. So that by *lust* we are to understand all those things that gratify some appetite of pleasure, wealth, or greatness; and by *flesh* (which is not here, as it is sometimes a general word) it is most agreeable to understand the lower and duller senses which lie most in the flesh, and are affected with things that have some grossness in them. And then the whole phrase, *lust of the flesh*, signifies that sort of things which give content to the touch, the taste and smell; such as are meat, and drink, and perfumes, and other voluptuous enjoyments, which I need not name, but are sometimes particularly called *flesh*. And then by the *lust of the eyes*, we are to understand such things as belong to the higher and more refined sense of seeing, viz. gold and silver, precious stones and jewels, lordships and large possessions, noble houses and rich furniture, beautiful pictures and fair gardens, fine clothes and costly attire; all that is comprehended under the name of *riches*, which is a thirst, as Solomon observes, yields only this

[1] 1 John ii. 16.

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satisfaction to the owner, that *he beholdeth them with his eye.* There is little in these things but what is all lodged in this sense; and therefore they are called the *lust of the eye,* because it loves to look upon them, and when that is done, they can do no more for him. Only they may prefer a man to that which he calls the *pride of life;* which signifies all those things that flatter and please the inward sense, our fancy or imagination. Such as are great offices and places of dignity, noble titles, all the honour and glory of the world, together with the esteem, at least the applause and commendation of men, which is wont to follow them.

One or more of these three sorts of things every man naturally hunts after, and his desires prick him forward in its pursuit. For these are men's study and labour; with these the devil baits his hooks to catch souls, and they who do not bite at one will be nibbling at another. They that are not tempted by the first to gluttony and drunkenness, fornication and such like filthiness, feel the second perhaps incline them to covetousness and the sordid love of money, with a thirst and greediness of another kind. Or if they can escape and despise these, they may notwithstanding be in danger to be carried away with the humour of prodigality, and affectation of vainglory, or ambition of dignities; which is attended with emulation, envy and other dangerous vices. As the African beast which some write of[1] is caught with music, and suffers its feet to be fettered while it listens to the lessons that are played to it; so do the generality of mankind let their souls be ensnared and led into a miserable captivity by the enchanting voice of pleasure, riches, or glory. Whilst they hearken to the bewitching melody which some of these court them withal, they are taken in the mighty hunter's net, and become a prey to him that lurks for souls, and seeks whom he may devour. And it has not been in the power of the wisest charmers that ever were in the world to open the ears of the most of men, and to convey the sense of better things into them. All the philosophy and learning that was so famous in former ages could never obtain such numerous, cheerful and obedient auditors, as the Syren songs which these three sing in men's ears have always

[1] [Called Dabuh by Purchas, from whom the author probably derived the story.—See his Pilgrimes, Book vi. chap. i. §. 9. vol. i. p. 847.]

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found. When the world therefore by that wisdom knew not God, *it pleased God*, says St. Paul, *by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*[i]. The faith of Christ directs and disposes us to avoid all those dangerous rocks on which they split themselves who listen to those deceitful songs. Now that the Son of God is come, he pulls our feet out of the net; and by his far more powerful charms so stops our ears to those enchantments, that there is no entrance for them any more. It seemed a foolish thing indeed to the world, to believe that the crucified Jesus was the Son of God; but where this simple faith prevailed, it did more than all the wisdom of the world was able to effect before. For it gave them a new understanding and saved them from perishing; by making them account it the greatest pleasure and glory and treasures to follow Jesus, and do the will of God, as he did. *The world*, they saw, *passeth away, and the lust thereof*, (if they do not leave us, we must at last leave them;) *but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*[j]. So those *three* heavenly witnesses, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, assure us: whose voice, as it is most sweet and melodious, so it is most powerful to disenchant us, and to preserve those who receive their testimony from all the bewitching temptations of those other *three*, the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye* and *the pride of life*. Nay, here are two threes of infinitely greater virtue and efficacy to prevail with us than all that the world's Trinity can offer to us, if we will but open our ears, and diligently listen to their voice.

And how can we choose but listen when the Father of heaven calls to us so graciously, when the Word opens his secrets to us, and the Holy Ghost proclaims such an abundant love of God towards us? The *water*, the *blood*, the *Spirit*, they also with one consent conspire with those, and all together sing this *new song*, THE SON OF GOD IS COME! THE SON OF GOD IS COME! This one note of their's more ravishes than all the pleasures and satisfactions which the world infatuates its followers withal. Heaven and earth cannot speak any thing more moving in our ears than this, which again and again salutes them with new joy. For what would you have them say? would it please you to hear that Infinite Goodness loves us; that the heavens stand open to us, and show us their glory; that God is willing to

[i] 1 Cor. i. 21. [j] [1 John ii. 17.]

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receive us up thither; that he will make us heirs of a kingdom, equal with the angels, to hear their songs, and join with that celestial quire! Behold! they are all included in this one sentence, THE SON OF GOD IS COME! GOD HATH GIVEN US HIS SON! This is the sweetest air that can touch our ears: this we can never be weary to hear: this strikes our souls, if we understand it, so gratefully, that we cannot but say, Let us hear that again. And therefore after the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost have blessed our ears with this joyful sound, here are three more that take it up, and repeat it to us with the strongest assurances that we hear the voice of God himself; and the oftener we listen to them and lend them our attention (the more frequently, I mean, we think upon the reasons we have to believe in Jesus), the more deaf shall we grow to all the sinful allurements of this world, how inviting soever before they have been. For my part, I think there is more real satisfaction in the very understanding of this one place of holy Scripture than in all the delights of worldly men. What is there, I beseech you consider, in all their sensualities, comparable to the rational gust of what is contained in that one voice of the Father, *This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?* What riches are there to be equalled with this treasure of divine knowledge, that God hath bestowed his own Son upon us? what honour like to this, to be preferred to be the friends, yea, the sons of God? Can you hear any thing so delicious as that voice of the Word, *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*[k]*?* Were there ever any jewels so precious as the inestimable gifts wherewithal the Holy Ghost hath enriched the church? What music is there fit to bear a part with those *hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs*[l] that it inspired the hearts of Christians withal? Doth it not even ravish the heart of a pious man to think of them, though he do not hear the like in these days? What is there in all the broken cisterns of this world that tastes like the *rivers of living water* that Jesus hath poured out unto us? What peace does it speak to us like that which by the blood of Jesus is purchased for us? or what power is there in any of this world's temptations that can stand before the voice of that *Spirit*

[k] Rev. ii. 7. [l] [Ephes. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.]

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which says, *Come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*[l]*?* Certainly, in the strength of such a faith, so fortified, so encouraged by all these witnesses, we may easily tread the *world* under our feet, and make its most mighty temptations crouch to us; whereas now, for want of this solid faith, we shamefully bow down to it and worship it. Let but any man remember when he reads these words, *Love not the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.* Or when he reads any other lesson in the holy books, let him but remember that thus says the Father of all, and thus says his Word; and this is the voice of the Holy Ghost, and of all the rest of the witnesses, who testify that Jesus, who teaches these things, is the Son of God; and then he will never be persuaded to yield to the fairest thing that ever eye beheld, or the sweetest thing that mouth can taste, or the greatest pleasure any other sense is capable to feel, if it must be enjoyed by the breaking of any of these commandments. No, he will *yield himself unto God*[m], and lay himself at the feet of his Word, and submit to the dictates and sentence of the Holy Ghost, and follow the example of Christ's purity, and be made conformable to his death, and be led by his Spirit, and think it an honour to be conquered by such defendants of the cause of Jesus. O how hateful would every sin be to us, though it dress up itself never so beautifully, and court us with never such promises of pleasure or greatness, did we but at the same time reflect upon these witnesses, and remember what they have testified to us! How should we defy it! how passionately should we tear all its gaudy dresses in pieces! how heartily should we despise all its temptations, which would have us slight all these great witnesses, who tell us the Son of God is come, and that he is come for this purpose, *that he might destroy the works of the devil*[n]*!* Every unlawful enjoyment would look like a manifest jeer to all these, and as if a man should say to them, Why do you trouble yourselves? this is our darling, our god, and all your persuasions shall not pre-

[l] Rev. xxii. 17. [m] Rom. vi. 13. [n] 1 John iii. 8.

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vail with us to let it go. It would appear a contempt of God; a laughing of his Word to scorn, who came upon so needless, at least fruitless an errand; a manifest challenge to the Holy Ghost, who by every sin is boldly opposed. And what heart can endure to think of being guilty of such madness; which throws dirt into this *pure water*, I mean the life of Christ, and treads his *blood* under feet, and miscalls the *Spirit* of grace, as if it were not *the truth*, but had deceived the world when it told them that *this is the will of God, even our sanctification. For God* (says St. Paul) *hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit*[o].

To conclude this: you know what is commonly said, and it is a certain truth, of those who are bit with a kind of spider in Italy, which they call a *tarantula*, that there is no way to cure them of their pleasant phrensy but by such music as is appropriate to the motions which their poison makes in the brain of him into whom it is infused. Let this be an emblem of the truth I have now delivered; that the old serpent having envenomed men's souls, poisoned their principles, perverted their affections, and depraved their lives, there is nothing of efficacy sufficient to recover them, but only such charms as these, which by this six-stringed instrument, as I may call it, God hath provided for our cure. And this will certainly do it by infusing the *faith* of Jesus into us, which is the *victory* whereby we *overcome the world*[p]. Do but hearken diligently to these witnesses; do but mind their sweet consent, their harmony and agreement in the testimony they give to this great truth, that Jesus our Master is the Son of God; and there is no venom so deadly which this faith will not expel, no love to the *world* so strong which it will not vanquish and subdue. It will recover us to ourselves, and make nothing seem so ridiculous as the folly and franticness of worldly men; yea, it will advance us to a divine and heavenly spirit, so that we shall not be apt to receive such pestilent infusions any more, but keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

[o] 1 Thess. iv. 3, 7, 8.

[p] [1 John v. 4.]

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VI.

For I must add now, in the last place, that this faith is so far from being unable to conquer all temptations which would hinder us from obeying our Saviour's commands, that it gives us power and strength to do our duty with cheerfulness. So St. John here tells us, when he adds to what he says of the keeping of his commandments, that *his commandments are not grievous*. For (as Œcumenius[o] well glosses) what load is it for a man to love his brother? what great burden is it to visit him if he be in prison? God doth not command thee to deliver him, but only to visit him: he doth not bid thee knock off his chains, but see how he bears them: nor doth he bid thee cure a sick man, but only comfort and relieve him; nor provide dainties for a poor man, but only feed him; nor give rich apparel to the naked, but only clothe them. And so we may conclude of the rest, that it is rather an ease than a burden to be sober and chaste in all enjoyments of pleasure; to be content with a small portion of those things which others desire with a greedy and ravenous eye; to bear with that patiently which we cannot remedy; to *be careful for nothing, but in every thing to make known our requests to God with prayer and thanksgiving*[p]; to be meek and peaceable amongst contentious people; to forgive those that injure us; to envy no man's greatness; and with an humble modesty to satisfy ourselves though we be not equal to them. These and such like qualities, wherewith Jesus would invest us, are in themselves most desirable; and, though richer than cloth of gold, are like our ordinary garments, which are no load to those that wear them. But they are the less grievous to those that believe in Jesus; who are endued with power from above, by receiving the testimony of so many divine witnesses, who assure them they are in the way of God, in the company of his Son, under the conduct of the Holy Ghost, in the direct road to that glorious place where Jesus is; and therefore why should not they rejoice and be exceeding glad to find themselves thus happy? That load which to a sick man seems intolerable, if it be laid on the neck of one in health, is so easy that he can run away with it with pleasure. And so it is in the case of keeping God's commandments, which, to a man that has spoiled his

[o] [In loc. p. 596 C.]

[p] [Phil. iv. 6.]

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soul by following divers lusts, are so far from being easy, that he thinks them insupportable, and impossible to be complied withal; but when he has recovered himself by the faith of Christ, and hath received the supply of these new and heavenly principles, they become, to the very same man, not only tolerable, but sweet and delightful. This faith would not be pleased to be excused from this burden; it would take it ill not to draw in the same yoke with Jesus; it naturally makes us of his Spirit, who said, *I delight to do thy will, O God.* For what is it that we believe? is it not that Jesus is the Son of God, his well-beloved Son? And shall we complain of that work which was the business and the delight of God's best beloved when he was in the world? It would be too grievous an accusation of God, to think that after he had filled the earth with joy and gladness for the coming of his Son, he should instantly quench it all, and turn it into heaviness, by a number of such severe and intolerable commandments as no man can look upon and not be melancholy. And what are the grounds of our belief? are they not all that heaven and earth can afford us? are we not as sure as God can make us? Fie for shame, then! what a reproach is it that any man should sigh and groan, look sour and sad, as if he had all the burden of heaven and earth to carry, when he has rather the aid and assistance of both to support and strengthen him under an easy load!

Certain it is, that according to our knowledge and understanding, so will be our faith: and according to our faith, so will be our strength. Now how can there be greater evidence and strength of reason to induce us to believe, than these six witnesses have given us? They fully satisfy our understandings; they make it completely rational to acknowledge Jesus to be the Son of God. And therefore why should not this faith, thus begot and standing on such sure foundations, give us a very great strength, courage, cheerfulness and spirit; making difficult things become easy, harsh things become sweet, and the most tedious stay in this world comfortable, by presenting us, and that so strongly, with the power and glory of the Lord Jesus? This faith, you see, rests upon these six columns; upon these two rows of pillars (as I may so speak): on the one side stands the testimony of the Father, the Word,

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and the Holy Ghost; on the other side, the testimony of the Water, the Blood, and the Spirit; and therefore nothing will be too great a burden to lay upon it: it will support any weight, and never let us groan, much less break under its load. *All things are easy*, as well as *possible, to him that believeth.*

It is the observation of Seneca, I remember, that nothing is so hard but the mind of man can master it, and make it familiar, by constant thoughts and pains about it. There are no motions so natural, but some by labour have restrained them, and made the forbearance of them easy: and none again so unnatural, but by the like daily practice and attention they have brought themselves to the delightful use of them. As some have kept long and tedious fasts, others perpetual silence, and have lived out of the company of all mankind; which are examples of the former kind. And we see instances of the latter, in those who learn to walk and dance upon ropes, to work with their feet, and to dive into the excessive depths of the sea. And can the mind of man alone, when it buckles itself to the business, be able to perform such difficult things with ease and satisfaction, and yet remain utterly unable to take any contentment in obedience to Christ's precepts, though it be exalted by faith, and a faith so strong, as these six witnesses, if we attend, will work in us? May things to which nature is not inclined be accomplished at last, and become habitual, and we think God too severe to expect from us those duties which are most agreeable to our natures, as all the actions of virtue are? And shall a weaker power master those hard and unnatural tasks, and a power stronger than all others sink under the burden of the most reasonable, and, in themselves, most natural commandments? It cannot but put a considering person into a little indignation, to hear men complain of the uneasiness of Christ's yoke, when they lay more troublesome and unmerciful burdens upon themselves without any murmuring. How can one see men, without some impatience, contend with swift horses, and endeavour to outrun them, and yet cry out of the tediousness of the race of God's commandments? Shall any man persuade us, that it is not so easy to learn the way of God's testimonies, as it is to work with his feet, or go upon his hands? Shall they make us believe it is so

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hard a business to bend their wills to God's, when we see their bodies made as supple as wax, that they may wreath them about at pleasure? Can it be half so troublesome to lay a bridle on our tongues, as it is never to speak at all? O man! where is thy reason, what is become of thy soul, that thou groanest in the service of God, and canst make a sport of far more grievous things? Thy own mind might teach thee better, if thou wouldst but hearken to its instructions; and therefore what may not God expect from the faith I am speaking of, which is a far more powerful principle, and hath made men *stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, endure torture and not accept deliverance*[o], when it was much weaker than our faith need now be? I will engage that if a man do but use himself frequently to ponder these words of St. John, and persuade himself fully, upon the testimony of these witnesses, that Jesus is the Son of God, he will account it a small business to deny his own will as Jesus did. He will never complain that he must refrain from any thing in obedience to him; and whatsoever he requires him to do, he will esteem it an excessive pleasure. For there can remain no doubt in his mind, that, if he be the Son of God, he hath power to help us, and that he will ever be assistant to us and bless us; because by this faith he dwelleth in us and we in him.

I have read of one, of a noble family, delicately educated, and of a tender health, who had a great mind to enter upon a religious course of life, (as they speak in the Roman church,) but was affrighted out of those thoughts by the apparent difficulty of the exercises wherein he was to be employed; for their ill diet, retirement, poverty, watchings, and such like hardships he imagined could not be endured. Till one day reading those words of the psalmist, which like a flash of lightning struck into his mind, *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places*[p], (which he expounded to this sense, God will enable me with speed and easiness to run not only upon the even ground and over the plains, but in craggy and steep places; he will lead me not only upon the level, but assist me to climb mountains, and to overtop the highest difficulties that are in my way to heaven,) and immediately found all his

[o] [Heb. xi. 34, 35.]

[p] Psalm xviii. 33.

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fears vanish, his resolutions determined, and such a courage put into him, that from this time forward he was immovably bent to that formerly dreadful kind of life. Would not this word of God then, think you, which I have expounded, inspire us with as manly a resolution and greatness of mind to obey God's unquestionable commands, if we did but suffer it to penetrate into our hearts? Did we but conceive that we heard the Father say to us perpetually, *This is my Son*, this that came by Water and Blood, that climbed even the cross itself, that surmounted the highest difficulties, He is my beloved Son; and if we thought we heard the Word say, *The Son of God is come, God is manifested in the flesh;* and felt the Holy Ghost inspiring us with the same heavenly thoughts; the whole glorious Trinity telling us they will assist us, and afford us their continual help; it could not but give wings, as I may say, to our feet, and make us skip over the most mountainous discouragements, and run the ways of God's commandments, and not be tired; that we might follow after, and go to the blessed Jesus. For the course of life which that gentleman affected was that of a religious order, (as they call it,) where they are tied to do more than God commands, to live by a rule stricter than the Gospel, and under the will of a superior, whom they are bound to obey as if he were Christ himself: and it was not the literal sense of the place neither which thus animated him, and put it into his heart to undergo such a servitude. And therefore if he did the will of men so cheerfully, and undertook more than God requires of us, and upon a weaker persuasion, by accommodating the sense of an holy word to his own present thoughts, there is no doubt but a right faith would endue us with the like power (notwithstanding the appearance of great labours) in the true service of God, in obedience to his indispensable commands; we having this word of God to strengthen our faith, the prime and natural intention of which is to make us confident that he who leads us in this way, the Captain that conducts us, is God's Son, his most dearly beloved; who cannot but be as faithful as he is powerful to make good all his promises to us.

And we should the rather strive to follow after him, and to run with joy the race that is set before us, because then we shall have the honour still *to testify* to him upon earth; we

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shall be his *witnesses*, and prove at this day, by his mighty power in our hearts and lives, that he is the Son of God. Turks and Jews, that read not our books, cannot be convinced by any arguments at present so much as by this. They see how we live, but we can show them no miracles to convince them, nor can we make them hear the voice from heaven for their conversion, till we can recommend our Bible to their serious consideration. And the only way to do that is, for us to live more justly, soberly, charitably, and piously than the rest of the world: by which means they may be brought to have better thoughts of Jesus by having good thoughts of us; and be induced to read our books, by seeing so much of them in our good works. And what happy days might we hope to see, could we but use this argument to prove Jesus to be the Son of God; that no men are so good, so holy and pure, so peaceable and kindhearted, so free from fraud and all guile, as those who are called by his name! How glorious then would the name of our Lord be over all the world! *His word would run and be glorified* (as the apostle speaks[q]), just as it did in ancient days, when they could say confidently, *Non de nostro, sed ex illorum numero*[r], &c. "They are not of our company, but of theirs (that follow the heathen superstition) who rob and steal by sea and land, who murder and kill, who cheat and cozen, who drink and swill, who prostitute their bodies and profane themselves by filthy lust; the whores, the fornicators, the cheats, the forgers of wills and testaments, the drunkards, the thieves, the perjured persons, and all the rest of the wicked crew are of their number: nothing of this can be objected to our people, whose whole religion is to live without wickedness, nay, without any spot or blemish. How would it stop the mouth of all the world, nay, make them fall down and confess that God is certainly among us, could we but say thus in our days, and make such a challenge to Turks and all other unbelievers! Shall we always let our Saviour want this noble testimony? Shall we do nothing but talk of him and prattle of our faith, and make our boast that we are right believers, and damn all infidel people? Alas, alas! these big words will do nothing: as long as they see us live no better

[q] 2 Thess. iii. 1.

[r] Lact. lib. 5. cap. 19. [vid. cap. 20. tom. i. p. 415.]

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than they, we shall not persuade them that we believe better. And therefore let us have this worthy ambition in our hearts, to become *witnesses* ourselves unto Jesus. Let us study how *to show forth his praises* (or rather powers[s]) *who hath called us into this marvellous light.* And since we cannot do it by miracles, let us do it by *well doing* and *patient continuance* in it. So shall *the name of our Lord Jesus be glorified in us, and we in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*[t], who, at his appearing, will *bear witness* to us that we were faithful and righteous, by receiving us, as God did Abel's gifts, up unto himself[u].

For hereby also we shall be instruments of conveying this faith down to posterity with some power. Would you not have them believe the same that you do? Is it not your desire that the next age may confess him as well as this? There is no such effectual means can be thought of to promote and propagate his faith as the fruits of it in an holy life. This will make men afraid now to speak evil of him; and this will teach our children after us to be zealous professors of Christianity, and not such cold believers or such infidels as we see and hear of in the world. Assure yourselves it is profaneness which hath made so many unbelievers in this age. Increase of wickedness, not only in themselves, but others, hath made some so impudent as to scoff at religion and blaspheme Christ. While they see those who acknowledge him do no better than themselves, they are inclined to think that their belief makes them no more worth than those who have none at all. Nay, since they concur with them in their wicked practices, they imagine that their fear of hell and hope of heaven is no part of their belief, but only of their profession. The hands of infidels are strengthened in their impieties by the perfidiousness of ungodly believers. They join with them to pull down Christian belief; and make that be thought nothing which doth nothing above what infidelity doth. And therefore let all those who love the memory of our Saviour, who love their posterity, and would not have them in danger to be drowned in a deluge of infidelity, put a stop to it, by *holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience*[v]. *Let every one that nameth the name*

[s] ἀρεταὶς, 1 Pet. ii. 9. [t] 2 Thess. i. 12. [u] Heb. xi. 4.
[v] 1 Tim. iii. 9.

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of Christ depart from iniquity[x], and endeavour all he can to support the honour of his name and of his religion by a strict observance of all his holy commands. They who believe not, or mind not what they believe, may *think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you*[y]. *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*[z].

And that now is the next thing which flows from hence. If we believe the record or *witness* which God hath given of his Son, it contains in it the greatest joy in the world. For *this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.* But I must refer that to another discourse alone by itself.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

Glory in the highest. Let the holy and undivided Trinity be for ever glorified by all mankind, especially by all Christian people, who are made partakers of *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. Blessed be God.*

I most thankfully receive the manifold testimony which he hath given of his well-beloved Son; and humbly *bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named, that he would grant me, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by the same Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith, that, being rooted and grounded in love, I may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of God.*

And God forbid that any soul who hears the voice of these witnesses of God should *refuse and turn away from him that speaketh from heaven*, and hath declared to us the unsearchable riches of God's grace, and the whole counsel of his will. O that all they, upon

[x] [2 Tim. ii. 19.] [y] 1 Pet. iv. 4. [z] Jude 20, 21.

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whom the glorious gospel of Christ hath shined, may most heartily believe in his name! Let them all be *knit together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* And God forbid that any of them should *hold the truth in unrighteousness: but as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let them walk in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as they have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

And quicken that faith, O thou Author and Finisher of it, that it may work with great power in all Christian hearts; and mightily bow their wills to forego any of their own desires rather than displease thee, and forfeit thy love and favour. Let it enable them to overcome the world, that they may be no longer slaves to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; but, conquering all these, may *yield themselves unto God to be the servants of righteousness, and obey from the heart that form of doctrine which is delivered unto them.* And may the powerful working of faith, and love, and hope make all our duty easy to us, that we may ever render thee cheerful as well as constant service. May thy testimonies be our daily delight, and *the rejoicing of our heart.* May we *love them above gold, yea, above fine gold.* May they be *dearer unto us than thousands of gold and silver.* May we daily *renew* our strength, *and run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.* May the holiness of our lives bear witness to the sincerity of our faith, that others may *glorify thee our God for our professed subjection to the gospel of Christ.* And we, *obtaining a good report by faith,* and carrying this testimony out of the world with us, that we have pleased thee, thou mayest receive us to thyself, to be glorified with thee, and to rejoice in thy love towards us for ever. Amen.

END OF VOL. II.

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